

Together Again

by mermaidbyheart

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Summary: "So many fears were swimming around and around in my mind.

Who would've dreamed the secrets we would find..I've found a world where love and dreams and darkness all collide. Maybe this time we can leave our broken world behind. We'll be together again. All would be just a dream in the end."

1. Chapter 1: Moving on

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While Rikki was watching Bella perform Zane was looking at her, a smile plastered on his face. She was so beautiful. He loved her shining smile, her light blue eyes, her curly hair, evsrything about her. Some clients were waiting to order so he had to go and take their orders, but he couldn't take his eyes off the curly blond. Right then and there he gave himself a promise that he'd win her back and he'd never let her go again.

Rikki was listening to Bella's song with a smile and was thinking about the lyrics. They were so true for her and her friends. They really weren't ordinary girls at all.

She was smiling and enjoying her best friend's singing when someone tapped her on the shoulder. She turned around to see who it was and couldn't believe her eyes.

"Derek?" A big smile lit up on her beautiful face.

"Well hello, stranger. Long time no see." He responded with a smile too.

"I can't believe it's really you! What are you doing here?" Rikki asked and hurried to give him a big hug.

He was her best friend from childhood but she hadn't seen him for too long now.

"Well, I just moved in here." He replied casually.

"What? No kidding!" Rikki gasped excitedly.

He shook his head with a smirk.

"So "Rikki's", huh? I never thought you, the rebel, will own a car." He said with raised eyebrows.

"No, it's not mine. It's my exboyfriend's." Rikki said quickly.

"Ex?"

"Long story." Rikki shrugged with a smile.

"So you're single now?"

"Oh, you know me. I love being a loner." It was her time to smirk.

"Do you want to go out for a walk?"

"Sure, I'll be glad." The curly blond nodded smiling.

She said a quick bye to Cleo and Bella and walked out with Derek.

Many years had passed since the last time she'd seen him, but he hadn't change much.

"So, what's going on with you? How are your parents?" Rikki was the one to break the silence between them.

"They're very good. Actually they've been asking about you." Derek answered.

"Really?" Rikki said raising her eyebrows.

"Yeah, they miss you." He said smirking.

"Yeah, I miss them too. Are they here with you?"

"No." He said. "But if I tell them you're here, they'll catch the first possible flight."

The curly blond smiled.

"It's been a long time." She said and they both stopped.

She looked at him and he looked at her.

"Yes." He said and he smiled. "A really long time."

"Well, you haven't changed much." Rikki laughed and elbowed him playfully.

"But you have. You're turned into a beautiful woman."

"Thank you." Rikki smiled and they carried on walking.

It was an unusually cold evening. The night sky was cloudy. Soon they were sitting down on the ground laughing at their memories.

"I'll never forget you face when you fell off that tree." Rikki stated laughing hard.

"I didn't fall, you pushed me off." Derek said also laughing.

"I did not!" Rikki shook her head still laughing like crazy.

"Oh, hell you did!" He was laughing almost as hard as she did. "Do you remember when one morning you went for a swim at the lake and Bryan peed in his pants when he saw you in your swimming suit. I think that was his first time when he saw a girl so barely dressed."

They were laughing like hell. Rikki and Derek were sitting there for nearly an hour.

"Let's go back." Rikki said. "I've promised to my friends to go out for a swim with them."

"What? At that time? It's almost 1 in the morning!"

"We love midnight swimming." Rikki said still laughing slightly. "Just like us when we were kids, Remember?!"

They both smiled at the memory and slowly stood up.

"Thank you for the nice evening." Derek said.

"It was my pleasure. You don't spend every evening with someone who's known in South Africa as the local bad boy laughing at your memories with him." Rikki grinned.

They went back to the cafÃ©.

"Come, I'll introduce you to my friends." Rikki said pulling him inside with her.

"Ok." He nodded.

They entered the cafÃ© and Rikki looked around.

Bella had finished singing so now she, Cleo, Lewis and Will were sitting together at one of the tables. Zane was behind the bar, cleaning some glasses, but when Rikki and Derek came in the cafÃ© he lifted his eyes and looked at the curly blond. She never responded to his look. Instead she simply walked over to the table of her friends.

"Hey!"

"Oh, hi! Where have you been?" Lewis asked playfully.

"It's not your business, Mr. Science." Rikki laughed. "Guys, I want

you to meet Derek Swan, my best friend since childhood. Derek, these are my friends." And she introduced them to each other.

"It's nice to meet you all." He said with a smile.

"It's nice to meet you too." Cleo said. "So, what was Rikki like a child?" She asked with a smile.

"Cleo!" Rikki said giving her a look, but the brunette only laughed.

"What? I'm just wondering if you were always so pushy and competitive."

They all burst into laughter, including Derek.

"Oh, believe me, I've never known someone more competitive than her." He laughed.

"Sorry for ruining the moment, but we have to go somewhere." Rikki said looking at Cleo and Bella.

"Where?" Cleo said, but Rikki only shot her a look, raising her eyebrows. "Oh, right."

"We have to go." Rikki said to Derek turning back to him. "So see you tomorrow?"

"Sure. If you want we can meet here for a coffee?"

"Ok. I'll meet you here!" Rikki nodded.

"Bye!" He said to her with a smile, before she and the guys walk out of the cafÃ©. Derek smiled to himself.

But before she could go, someone took her arm.

"Can we talk?"

"No, Zane. I'm going out for a swim with the girls."

And Rikki turned to walk away, but he took her arm again.

"Who's he?" Zane asked nodding towards Derek.

"It's none of your business." Rikki said and took her arm out of his grip, walking out of the cafÃ©.

The girls were waiting for her outside. They jumped in the water and swam to the moon pool. There they just layed in the water, listening to the sound of the small waves.

"It's so relaxing here." Rikki said when she saw Cleo and Bella were smirking. "What?" She asked raising her eyebrows.

"He's hot." Bella said bursting into laughter.

"He's only a good friend." The curly blond said llaughin too.

"Maybe, but he's so into you." Cleo stated.

"What?"

"Oh, come on. He couldn't take his eyes off you." Bella said smirking.

"Shut up!" Rikki laughed and sprinkled playfully both of them with water.

"You should go out with him." Cleo said smiling.

"No way." Rikki said quickly.

"Why?" Bella asked curiously.

"Trust me, it's better for me and him to stay just friends. I just broke up with Zane and I want to enjoy life without having to worry about boyfriends." And with this Rikki ended the topic.

That night she thought about her past and about Derek. She thought she'd moved on from her past when she used to have a crush on him, but she wasn't sure anymore.

The only thing she knew was that she didn't want someone else she had to hide her secret from. What she really wanted was to be alone.

Now with Derek back the curly blond realized so many feelings from her past had come back. And she had to make things clear. For herself.

2. Chapter 2: The confession

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Rikki woke up early that morning. She realized she was excited to see Derek again.

The curly blond took a bath and washed her teeth. She decided she'd wear her hair down today. She combed it, then put on a pair of shorts and a blue top and was ready to go to the cafÃ©. Rikki was in a really happy mood that morning.

She went out of her house and walked to the cafÃ©. Derek was waiting for her at one of the tables.

"Hi!" She greeted him enthusiastically and sat at the chair opposite him.

"Good morning." He answered with a smile.

They had a cup of coffee laughing and having such a good time. Rikki's hand was resting on the table and he took it in his. She didn't mind at all.

While they were having what probably was the time of their lives, Zane was watching them behind the bar. He was supposed to be making drinks, but he couldn't take his eyes off Rikki. Seeing her so happy with that guy and holding hands with him, made Zane very jealous. He

knew he was losing her and he couldn't live without her.

Back on their table Derek leaned to Rikki.

"I have to tell you something. I wanted to wait, butâ€|I have to tell you now. Look, the reason why I moved in hereâ€|is that someone's haunting me."

"What? Why?"

"I can't tell you."

"Why not?"

"Because I know you too well, Rikki."

"Sorry?"

"If I tell you, you'd want to help and I can't let you do that."

"It's my life so it's up to me what I do and why I do it." She said still not understanding a word Derek said.

"I knew you were gonna say that. I've always admired your courage and your strength when we were little andâ€|", he hesitated for a moment, "I've always loved you."

She looked at him her eyes wide open, but at the same time she held his hand tighter.

"I came here not only to run away, but also to see you again after so many years and I don't want anything to happen to you." Derek said looking her right in the eyes with a worried expression.

"Derek, look, this decision is not about you. It's about me, about my life. And it's my decision. Thank you for the beautiful words, but I want to help you, whatever it is, and nothing's gonna change my mind. You're my best friend, and I don't want anything to happen to you, either."

He rose his hand and fondled her cheek.

"You're an amazing young woman, you know?"

She smiled. He leaned towards her and their lips connected. Rikki was amazed to realize how much she enjoyed the kiss.

Zane, still behind the bar, saw that Derek was kissing Rikki and freaked out. Rikki was _his_ girl. What right had some stranger to kiss _his_ girl? He had to do something. He had to do it now. A thought came to his mind. He smiled to himself. It had to work. He wrote something down on a piece of paper.

He went to give the drinks to Rikki and Derek and he put the note under her drink. She opened it. It said only "20:30h. The Moon Pool. Tonight". Derek looked at Rikki curiously.

"Well? What's the note about?"

"Nothing interesting." She answered quickly.

They spent the rest of day together walking on the beach, talking and stuff like that. Derek was walking in the water, but Rikki was far from him on the sand.

"Come closer." He said, reaching with his hand to take hers.

She made a step back so he couldn't reach her.

"No."

"Why?"

"Because I don't want to."

Derek looked at her. Then he took her hand and tried to pull her closer to him. Rikki jumped back before the water could touch her feet. Derek started laughing at her.

"What, are you scared of the water or something?"

"No. I just don't want to get wet, that's all."

"No, it's not. You're hiding something."

"I'm not hiding anything."

"Yes, you are. You used to love the water once and now you're avoiding it as if your life depends on that."

Rikki's heart fell. Derek was right.

"I still love the water. Just...not that much anymore."
Lie.

Eventually they sat down on the sand far enough from the water. Derek took her hand in his.

"There really is a big change in you, you know?!"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, you've not only grown into a very beautiful, smart and intelligent young woman, but there's something else about you. I don't know what exactly, but I think it's something very special. Like you are. You're very special to me, Rikki." He gently put a blond curl behind her ear.

"Derek, Iâ€|" He gently put his finger on her lips.

"Please, don't say anything. I'm sorry about that kiss earlier. I shouldn't kiss you, I justâ€|"

"No, don't be sorry." This time she took his hand. "Iâ€|I enjoyed it. It was very nice. It's justâ€|right now I want to be alone for a while. I broke up with my ex-boyfriend not long ago, and I just need some time."

"I understand." He said and a smile of hope lit up his face. "Well, I'm chased by, and I can't go anywhere, so I guess I'll wait for you." He said with a playful smile.

"Thanks for the understanding." She said also smiling.

She looked at her watch.

"I have to go now. See you later?"

"Definitely." He smiled.

"Ok. Bye!"

She walked towards the cliffs at the other side of the beach. After making sure no one could see her she jumped in the water. It was cold, but fresh and it helped clear her mind.

She was thinking about both Derek and Zane. She really liked Derek's kiss, but deep down her heart she still had feelings for Zane and felt like she was cheating on him. She hoped that only the time will help her figure out what to do.

Remembering Zane's note she headed straight towards Mako and the moon pool. She had no idea why Zane had asked her to meet him there, but she was soon going to find out.

3. Chapter 3: One stupid mistake

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The moon pool looked as beautiful as always. The girls had cleaned it all up and it was almost like before.

Rikki was swimming for an hour when she decided it was time to go the moon pool. When she went there there was still no trace of Zane so she decided to wait.

While she was waiting for him she was lying in the water with her eyes closed, thinking about the past, about her whole life. She remembered about South Africa, about Derek and their small band. Four boys and herself. But she acted so not girly that the boys admired her and secretly had a crush on her. Then she remembered when she had to move on. All the boys told her that they'll gonna miss her so much.

She remembered her first days in the new town and in the new school. She remembered the beginning. She remembered she took something of Zane's zodiac just to annoy him. He thought it was Cleo who took it, and tried to trick her, but then Rikki saved her, jumping in the zodiac. She remembered Emma's words when she asked her to go for a ride with them "Are you licensed?", "Are you my mother?", was Rikki's reply. She smiled. She loved these memories. She remembered when Cleo fell in the cave leading to the moon pool. And then she remembered the moment their life changed forever.

She was so deep in her memories that she didn't noticed when the time had passed and she didn't heard Zane's steps. When he came to the moon pool he saw she was still with closed eyes and she was smiling a

bit playing with the water with her hands. She was more beautiful than ever. He couldn't help with smile. What's more for a moment he even forgot he was angry and jealous. He was there with her and only that mattered.

"I'm glad you're here." He said.

Rikki opened her eyes and looked at him.

"You asked me to come. I came. Now spill. What's all this about?!" And she moved, putting her arms at the edge of the pool.

He didn't know how to begin, but he knew what he wanted to say.

"Rikki, look I love you."

"Please, don't start again." She said annoyed and with a grimace of boredom.

"No, let me finish, first. Riki, I love you, you are my life. You are the only thing I can think about, every day. When you're not around I don't know what I'm doing. When you're not aroundâ€|it's like a piece of me is missing. Like a part of myself is gone. I can't live without you. Today when I saw you holding hands with that guy and when I saw him kissing youâ€|it hurt me. Of course I was jealous and angry, but above all this, my heart was bleeding, because I couldn't bear the pain of losing you. I wrote you the note and I wanted you to come here, becauseâ€|because I wanted to ask you to give me one more chance. One last chance. Please, that's all I'm asking for."

"Zane, I'm sorry if I'd hurt you kissing Derek, really. That's the last thing I wanted to do. But you have to understand that I'm trying to move on. The way you felt today when you saw us, was the way I felt when I saw you kissing Sophie. I still care about youâ€|but only as friend. I still love youâ€|but I'm not in love with you anymore. You have to understand me and let me go. I'm tired of us repeating the same things again and again. Please, just leave me alone once and for all. I can't take this again and again anymore. I just want to carry on with my life. And I'm sorry if I've hurt you with what I said, but that's my last word. This is it, Zane. I'm done with it."

She tried to smile at him, but he looked away.

He couldn't believe that she could say something like that. He loved her more than his own life and he thought she felt the same for him. Obviously he was wrong. In the depths of his eyes, small tears started to form.

"If that's what you really want, than fine. I'll leave you alone. But like I said I can't live without you. And I won't."

He pulled out a gun from his pocket and pointed it at his head. For a moment Rikki froze.

"Zaneâ€|what the hell are you doing?"

"Well it's obvious, isn't it? I'm going to put an end. If I can't be

with you, I don't want to live. I'll set both of us free."

Rikki pulled out herself from the water and dried off quickly. Then she stood up and looked him in the eyes.

"Is this some stupid plan to make me go back to you? Because if it is, it's not going to work."

He lowered the hand with the gun for a moment. He couldn't believe how distant she had become.

"How can you even say that?" He asked her shocked.

"Because it looks like it. Besides you'll never do this." Rikki nodded to the gun and made a step closer to him. "Now, stop with this nonsense and don't push my buttons."

"So you think I don't have the guts to do it?" He put the gun to his head again.

"I think you're beating a dead horse and you should give up." And she tried to pull the gun from his hand.

For a moment the whole situation became a complete chaos. Zane was so shocked of how cold she acted so he lowered the gun again. She decided to take advantage and tried to pull it away from him, but he didn't let her. Then the sound of a gunfire echoed, followed by a loud scream "Rikki" by Zane's mouth.

His eyes were wide open. He dropped the gun because of the shock. In less than a heartbeat Rikki was lying on the ground, her chest covered in blood. Zane fell on his knees and took Rikki in his arms. Warm tears started to fall from his eyes. For a second Rikki's eyes found his and she looked at him: blue in brown.

"I'm so sorry." He said crying and shaking. "Forgive me."

Rikki smiled and fondled his cheek. It was hard for her to breathe, because of the pain, and he could see it, but still she barely managed a few words.

"It's ok."

Then she closed her eyes and her head leaned helplessly to one side, with a small tear falling down her cheek. The hand fondling Zane's cheek thudded to the floor and Rikki moved no more.

"No!" Zane screamed.

He bursted into tears, but after a while he noticed something; vshe was still barely breathing and her warm blood was still gushing from the wound.

He lifted Rikki in his arms and hurried back to the entrance and back through the island to his boat. He gently put her in, taking her head in his lap.

"Hold on, Rikki, please, just hold on. I know how strong you are, you can get through this, you can't die." He told her gently.

Warm tears were falling from his eyes. He leaned and whispered in her ear, "Please, don't leave me."

He gently touched her lips with his. He was fondling her hair crying. She had to live. He couldn't imagine life without her.

He took out his phone and quickly dialed first Cleo and then Bella.

When they reached the shore he lifted Rikki in his arms and ran to the nearest hospital. There the doctors rushed Rikki to the operating room. He had to sit down and wait alone. After a few minutes Cleo, Bella, Lewis and Will ran into the hospital and straight to Zane. He was sitting with tears falling down his cheeks, shaking and staring in the empty space. He was covered with Rikki's blood.

"What happened?" Cleo asked.

"How is she?" Bella questioned.

He didn't move. Gilt was filling him all over.

"I shot her." He said without looking at them and without moving a muscle.

Another tear fell down.

"What?" Cleo shouted.

She, Bella and the two boys slumped in the chairs next to Zane. Tears started falling Cleo and Bella's cheeks too.

Zane buried his head in his hands. He still couldn't assume what has happened. All he knew was that because of one stupid mistake he could lose Rikki.

His stupid mistake.

4. Chapter 4: The elusive shadow

Chapter 4: The elusive shadow

They felt like they're sitting there for hours.

Soon Cleo called Derek and he hurried to the hospital, to join them. They kept asking Zane questions and eventually he told them everything. They were looking at him shocked and disgusted at the same time. Finally after about two hours the doctor came.

"How is she?" They all asked at once.

"We took out the bullet, but her heart stopped for a few seconds. We had to reanimate her. She's stable now."

"Can we see her?" Cleo asked.

"Yes, but she's still sleeping. Don't wake her up."

They all nodded and walked to her room.

Derek turned to Zane.

"I think you shouldn't go inside."

Normally Zane would shout at Derek or even punch him in the face, but now he felt so tired of the jealousy and the anger he had been feeling for so long that he didn't say anything, he just walked past him and entered the room.

Fresh tears started rolling his face, seeing the girl he loved lying so fragile in that bed by his own fault. Zane walked to the bed, and gently took her hand in his. Then he leaned and kissed her forehead. "I will always love you. Please, forgive me.", He whispered quietly in her ear, but the others heard him. The next thing he ran out of her room and outside in the cold, night air. That night he walked for hours.

{ * }

The next few months felt like years to Zane.

He couldn't sleep, he was walking around like a zombie or something.

He had the same nightmare every night â€“ Rikki's lifeless body in his arms, covered in her warm blood. Every night he was waking up shaking and sweaty, again and again.

After everything that had happened he closed deep down himself and became distant to everybody. He didn't want to see anyone or talk to anyone. Especially Rikki. This was not a problem though, because it seemed that after Rikki was discharged from the hospital, Cleo, Bella, Lewis, Will and most of all Derek were determined not to leave her alone, especially if Zane was around. He didn't mind and he never tried to stay alone with her.

He just couldn't look her in the eyes. After what he did, he was feeling so guilty and was so ashamed of himself, that he even was afraid to stay alone with Rikki. All he wanted at the moment, was to be alone.

For Rikki everything got back to normal.

She had recovered completely, but still there was a small scar on her chest.

She wasn't angry at Zane for what had happened at all, because she knew that it was not his fault. Actually she was shocked to find out how glad she was that the bullet shot her, not him.

She really wanted to talk to him, and was always mad at her friends that they didn't want to leave her alone in order to do so. One time, however, she managed to sneak out from her friends, but when she finally found Zane he ran away from her.

That night Zane couldn't sleep again.

He was sitting in his bed, with his back leaned on the wall, deep in his thoughts. He reached his hand and took something out of his

nightstand.

A small ultramarine box.

He opened it. There was a ring with big ruby on it. It was beautiful. Inside it was engraved "Love's consuming fire". It was reflecting the moonlight in such a beautiful way that it looked like it was burning inside. One small, warm tear rolled down his cheek. He put the box opened at his nightstand just looking at it. He closed his eyes.

Eventually after an hour or two he started falling asleep. Suddenly he felt someone touching his cheek. He opened his eyes immediately, but there was no one in the room except him. He thought he probably has imagined it when his look fell over the nightstand and he realized that the small box was missing.

Actually it was the only thing that was missing.

He looked everywhere, but he couldn't find it. It was gone, someone had stolen it. He sat slowly on the bed. He wondered who was in his room and might have taken the ring. Could it have beenâ€¢_she_? "No", he thought, "That's impossible". But, was it?!

That night he had nightmares of elusive shadows, sneaking in his room. In the morning he woke up in 8.00 am. He decided to go out for a walk.

He was walking down the beach when he heard someone calling his name and he froze. It was Rikki. He continued walking a bit faster hoping she won't follow him.

"Zane! Zane, wait!" She shouted.

She ran to him and grabbed his arm to stop him. He had no choice but turn around and he found himself inches away from her. He leaned his head down, he couldn't look her in the eyes.

"Why do you keep running away from me?"

He didn't say anything.

"I'm not angry at you if that's what you're scared of." She said and took his hand in hers.

He was so shocked from her words that he rose his head and looked at her.

"It wasn't your fault. The fault was only mine. I tried to take the gun away from you. In fact, I'm glad that it shot me, not you. So, just stop blaming yourself."

He was looking at her his eyes wide open and full with tears. She smiled and fondled his cheek.

"Say something!" She said.

"You are the most amazing woman in the whole world that I know of, you know?! I mean I shot you and you almost died. But unlike everybody else, you don't blame me, you think I'm innocent and you

came to me and started comforting me. Howâ€|how could you do that? You have every reason to hate me, but you don't. How is it that after all I've done to you, you still care for me?"

She smiled.

"I guess this is the kind of girl I am."

They both couldn't help but laugh. For a moment he hesitated, but then he lifted his hand and fondled her hair.

"Thank you." He said. "Thank you for coming and for telling me these things."

She answered with a smile.

Then they heard Cleo and Bella calling Rikki's name.

"I have to go now." She said and before she left, she gave him a kiss on the cheek.

He looked after her and touched his cheek at the place she had kissed him. He smiled a bit.

He realized there was a change in her too. Maybe she was also shaken from the incident, but there was definitely a change.

She had become unusually wormer to him and for a moment a thought of happiness pierced his heart â€" maybe there was still chance for them!

All he wanted to do now, was to find that elusive shadow that stole his engagement ring.

The ring he wanted to give Rikki on that dark night at Mako Island.

5. Chapter 5: Your Cheating Heart

Chapter 5: Your Cheating Heart

The next few days Zane was desperately trying to find the one who stole the engagement ring he wanted to give Rikki, but with no success at all. Seeing the change in Rikki he still hoped there was a chance for them. And wouldn't miss it for the worldâ€!

Rikki was walking at beach, deep in her thoughts.

That was the first time after the incident when she got to be all alone for a while (if she didn't count the time when she'd run away to talk to Zane) and she really loved that.

She was so confused, she didn't know what she was feeling anymore.

On one hand, after what happened at Mako she was asking herself one single question: "_Did I_ _make the right choice when I dumped him?_". He'd really hurt her when she saw him kissing Sophie, but she shouldn't have been so hard with him. She didn't have the right to

be. Besides even though she hated it, she still had feelings for him. Strong feelings.

On the other side, there was Derek, her best friend from childhood, the first boy she had ever had a crush on, when they were younger, and who knew all about her. Well, almost all. There was one thing he still didn't know her mermaid identity - and for now it was better that way for her.

She thought her feelings for him were gone long ago, but now when she saw him again after so many years, and after he kissed her she didn't know what to think or what to feel anymore.

She was so deep in her thoughts, that she didn't hear someone walking behind her.

At the very next moment someone grabbed her from behind, curling his hands around her waste, and kissed her on the cheek, saying, "Hi, stranger!"

She pulled away from him in a second. She didn't like what he'd just done. When she was with Zane, he used to do that all the time and she loved it. But Derek doing it didn't feel right. It felt so wrong, actually.

"Please don't do that again." She said to him.

"Why?" He asked like he was sensing something was going on in her head.

"Because I hate all these romantic-kind-of things and you know it."

"Ok, then, I won't do it again."

Rikki started to walk again and he walked next to her. He reached to take her hand in his and she didn't pull it back.

"May I ask you something?" He said trying to sound as calm as possible. "I know it's probably too soon, but would you like to|you knowâ€|go out for a dinner with me?"

Rikki stopped death in her tracks and looked him right in the eyes.

"You mean like a date?"

He nodded, his eyes filled with hope.

"Look, feel free to say "no", if you don't want to." He said like he was reading her thoughts.

The curly blond didn't know what to say. On one side she'd really like to go out with him, but on the other, something inside her heart was telling her it was wrong.

Finally she heard myself saying, "Sure, I guess I'd go out with you."

He at her beautiful blue eyes, unable to hide the excitement in his

own.

"Really?"

"Yeah, I don't see why not." She nodded and tried to smile at him.

"Great. I'll pick you at 9.00 pm tonight."

Rikki nodded with a small smile.

Then Derek left and she dived in the water heading straight to Mako.

She was glad to find out she was alone in the moon pool.

The curly blond stayed there, just floating and thinking, until it was time for her to go get ready for her date.

She went home and straight to her room.

Rikki looked at her wardrobe to find something suitable to wear. Her look fell to a beautiful red dress; the one Zane had given her as a present so long ago. Rikki knew she couldn't wear it. She shouldn't.

The curly blond sighed. It seemed it was the only dress in her wardrobe, when suddenly her look fell over a big white box at the bottom. She had completely forgotten about it.

Rikki took it out and put it on her bed. This was the only thing that had left from her mother when she left her and her dad. She was saving it all those years, hoping her mother would eventually come back and she'd give it back to her. Rikki sighed to herself; seems she was wrong. She opened the box and pulled out the dress.

After about half an hour her phone rang. She reached for it and looking at the screen she froze when she saw it was Zane. After a bit of a hesitation she picked up.

"Zane?"

"Rikki, can I come by at your place? I need to talk to you."

"Zane, I don't know."

"Please, only for a few minutes. It's important."

"Ok." Rikki said.

"Thanks. I'll be there in a few."

And they hung up.

Rikki was already ready for the dinner so she decided to go downstairs. She couldn't help but start pacing around, when after about ten minutes the doorbell rang.

"Coming!" She said and went to open the door, realizing she'd never felt more nervous in her entire life.

When Rikki opened the door and Zane looked up at her he suddenly found himself lost for words. He was literally speechless.

The curly blond looked more beautiful than ever. She was wearing a beautiful dark blue dress that matched the color of her eyes and her blond hair was up, leaving a few curls gently fall down to her face.

Zane opened his mouth a couple of times in order to say something but he just couldn't.

"Come in." Rikki said eventually, breaking the weird silence.

She let him in, and turned around to close the door behind him. When she turned back to Zane, he saw a hidden sadness in the beautiful blue eyes he loved so much.

Finally I managed to say, "You look so beautiful!"

"Thanks." She said and gave him a small smile.

They sat on the sofa next to each other. That's when Zane finally came to his senses and realized she was looking like that probably because she was going out on a date.

"You said you wanted to talk to me." She said waiting for him to say something. "What about?"

"Are you going to go out?" He asked her trying to sound gentle.

"Yes. Derek asked me to go out for a dinner with him and I agreed." She said looking at him with sadness in her eyes. "He's going to be here soon, so you better tell me what you wanted to talk about."

"I wanted to ask you something. Why did you come to me the other day to comfort me? What made you come to me? I mean for a second there, one single second, I thought that maybe you still had feelings for me." Zane said, looking her straight into the eyes.

Rikki looked at him not saying anything for a few seconds.

"I don't know." She said finally, shrugging slightly. "So much happened lately, that I have no idea anymore. But I came to you, because I didn't want you to blame on yourself something that's not your fault."

Zane knew she was sincere and that made him smile a bit. He gently took her hand in his.

"Thank you." He said to her. "Thank you for being honest."

She gave him a small smile.

Looking right into her eyes and just looking at how beautiful she was, he felt the sudden urge to do something. He leaned forward and his lips touched hers. Quickly realizing what he'd done and that she might get angry, he pulled away.

Rikki had closed her eyes and was breathing heavily in an attempt to calm herself down. When she opened her eyes, Zane could see a little tears forming in their depths. But before any of them could say something her phone rang. She picked up and stood from the sofa.

She had talked for only a few seconds when she hung up and turned to him.

"I think you should go. Derek will be here after a few minutes."

Zane nodded slightly and stood up. Rikki walked him to the door and opened it. He walked out and turned to her. He'd be lying if he said he wasn't jealous as hell, but he was tired to be.

Unlikely for him, he only smiled, a genuine smile.

"Have a good time."

She nodded with a hint of a smile appearing on her face and she did something even she hadn't expectet to do; she kissed him on the cheek.

"Thank you."

Zane smiled, this time a bit wider at her and then left, waving for "bye". She waved back with a smile and came in.

Zane went home that night happier than he thought he'd be, because he had finally found the answer he'd been looking for, so long; there was still a chance for him and Rikki.

Deep down in her heart her love for him would never cheat on her and now they both were sure if it.

6. Chapter 6: Dating the wrong guy

Chapter 6: Dating the wrong guy

The second before Rikki entered her trailer again, when she was watching Zane walking away, she felt the sudden urge to run after him and stop him. Instead of doing so, however, she just walked in the trailer and closed the door behind her.

She leaned on the door and squeezed her eyes shut for a moment. She lifted her hand and touched her lips where the memory of Zane's was still burning on them. She realized how much she'd liked his kiss and how muche she had missed it.

Someone knocked on the door, taking her out of her thoughts.

She took a deep breath and opened the door, thinking it was Zane again, but it wasn't.

Derek was standing right in front of her holding a big, beautiful sunflower. When Rikki opened the door he was getting ready to say something, but when he saw her, he couldn't help but stare in awe.

"You look...incredible!" Was all he could barely say, still looking at her.

"Thanks." She smiled. "What's with the sunflower?" She asked him, lifting her eyebrows.

"Since you don't like all the romantic stuff, I assumed you don't like roses too, so I decided that this would be the perfect flower to give you, considering its name describes you perfectly." And he handed it to her with a big smile on his face.

"Thanks." She said with a forced smile, taking the flower.

"So, shell we go now?" He held out his hand to her and she took it.

"We shell." She nodded.

They got into his car and he drove me to what was probably the other side of the town.

"What are we doing here?" She asked him.

"You'll see." He said with a playful smile and winked at her.

When they finally stopped and got out of the car, Rikki realized they were standing in front of a high building. He led her in and she found out they were standing in front of a big restaurant.

When they entered in, a man came and showed them their table.

Rikki noticed that when he left them at their table he was staring at her. But he wasn't the only one.

"Why all those people are staring at us?" She asked Derek quietly.

To her surprise he smirked.

"They are not staring at us. They're staring at you.

"At me? Why? Is there something wrong with the way I look?"

"No, just the opposite. They stare at you, because you're the most beautiful girl here." He smiled.

Rikki felt she was blushing.

The people soon returned to what they were doing and she was glad because she hated it when someone was staring at her.

The first part of their date went fine. They were talking, they were having fun and laughing over some of their memories. Everything seemed to be perfect. Her hand rested on the table and Derek took it in his.

"You really are the most beautiful young woman, you know?" He said with a smile and fondled her cheek.

"Derek, Iâ€œ" Rikki began unsure of what to say, but he interrupted

her.

"Don't say anything." He said.

He looked straight at her beautiful blue eyes and she looked at his.

"I love you, Rikki."

At that moment she didn't know what to say. She didn't know what to feel.

And before Rikki could stop him, he leaned forward and pressed his lips onto hers. She quickly pushed him away, and without saying a word, she ran to the bathroom, shutting the door and locking it behind her.

She put my hands on the nearest sink and looked at her reflection in the mirror. She was breathing hard. She wiped her lips with the back of her hand as if she was trying to wipe away his kiss, but she knew she couldn't.

All of a sudden and without knowing why, she felt disgusted by herself.

She took a deep breath in an attempt to calm down. Then, suddenly, she knew exactly what she had to do. She opened her purse, and took out her lipstick to put some on her lips. With one last deep breath, she walked to the door, unlocked it and went back to their table.

When she came back, Derek started apologizing to her.

"I'm sorry." He said. "I know I shouldn't tell you what I did and that I shouldn't kiss you."

He tried to take her hand in his, but she pulled it away.

"Look, Derek, I have to go." She said.

"No, please, don't go yet."

"I'm sorry, but I really have to go." And she stood off the table.

"Would you at least let me drive you back home?"

"No, thanks. I need a walk."

And before he could say or do anything else she stormed off the restaurant.

She took off my shoes and ran straight to the nearest beach, diving into the water and heading to the other side of the town.

She found a safe place, pulled herself out and headed straight to where her heart was telling her to go. She stood at the front door and taking a deep breath she pressed the doorbell. When the door opened Rikki found herself excited to see the person on the other side. He looked at her with eyes wide open in shock.

"What are you doing here?"

"I had to do something."

She put her arms around his neck and pressed her lips against his.

At first he was so amused, he couldn't do anything, but then he put his arms around her pulling her closer to him, and kissing her even harder.

When they finally released from the kiss they were both smiling.

"So that's why you ran away like that?!" They heard a voice behind them.

Rikki turned around in a flash.

"What are you doing here?" She asked.

"You forgot this and I decided to follow you, to give it back." Derek said stretching his hand to her, giving her purse to her. "But I wish I hadn't."

Rikki took it and looked in his eyes. She could see the pain and the disappointment in them.

"Derek, I'm sorry, but you have to understand thatâ€|" She began to say but he lifted his hand interrupting her.

"How could you even look at him, after all he's done to you? And that night at Mako? He almost killed you there, Rikki!"

"No, he didn't!" She said and Derek looked at her with amusement. "All he wanted to do there was to kill himself and his own pain. I tried to stop him and then by accident I was shot. But that's all it was â€" an accident."

"Don't cover for him!" Derek shouted.

"I'm not covering for him, that's the honest truth." Rikki crossed her arms in front of her chest. "You should go, Derek, you have no business here."

"If I go you're coming with me. I have no intention to leave you with a dangerous guy like him." He said.

"No. Zane's not dangerous, and besides I can very well take care for me by myself. I'll go when I want. You leave right now."

Before walking away, Derek tried to grab Rikki's arm and pull her with him, but Zane stopped him grabbing his.

"You heard the lady." He said only.

Derek pulled his arm off Zane's grip.

For a moment he stood silent and then he punched Zane in the face, knocking him on the ground.

"You don't deserve her." He shouted to him.

Rikki stood in front of him and pushed him away from Zane.

"Go away!" She shouted, giving time to Zane to stand up, but Derek shook his head "No".

When Zane was up again, Derek moved in his direction, rising his hand again, but they curly blond was faster. She curled her fingers and burned his fist.

"Oh! What the hell was that?" He screamed in pain looking at his burned hand, that has now become red.

He looked first at Zane then at me, and before he quickly walked away he said, "This isn't over. It's just the beginning of a war."

Then he left.

Zane looked at her, with a "You shouldn't do this, but it was cool" kind of look. They both smiled slightly at each other. She moved closer to him, gently wiping away the blood from his lips.

"Are you ok?" She asked concerned.

He looked at her eyes and fondled her cheek with his hand.

"Never better." He smiled.

She smiled back.

He leaned and kissed her, taking her in his arms and carrying her in, shutting the door behind him with his foot. He carried her upstairs to his room, locking the door and gently put her in his bed, never breaking the kiss. He unzipped her dress and she removed his t-shirt.

For a moment he broke the kiss looking straight in her eyes.

"Do you really want this? I mean us back?"

"Absolutely!" She answered with a smile.

"That's all I wanted to hear." He smiled back and he didn't say anything else, again.

That night they spent together.

In the morning Zane was the first to wake up. He looked at Rikki still sleeping in his arms and smiled. He felt so happy, he haven't felt like for a long time. He gently touched her lips with his. She smiled a bit and responded to his kiss.

"Good morning." She said, opening her eyes and looking at him.

"Good morning." He smiled at her.

She yawned sleepily. He smiled and put a piece of hair behind her ear.

"What do you want for breakfast?" He asked her with a smile.

"I don't know." She answered. "Pancakes maybe."

"I'll go and make some." He smiled and kissed her.

Then he got up, and after putting on his shorts and t-shirt he went downstairs.

He felt so stupidly happy.

When Zane got out of the room Rikki decided she couldn't sleep anymore and looked around, wondering what to wear. She opened Zane's wardrobe and borrowed one of his shirts.

She then went down to the kitchen. Sensing the smell she smiled.

"It smells good."

Zane smiled and looked at her.

"I see you've borrowed one of my shirts."

"I hope it's not a problem." She smiled.

"Not at all." He smiled back. "You can keep it if you want. You look sexy in it." And he kissed her.

They had a lovely breakfast and then they had to leave the house.

Zane was going to Rikki's and Rikki had to go home and change, before she'd go to the cafe too.

What was bothering her now was the reaction of her friends when they find out she was back with Zane.

What would they do? Would they support her decision or would they reject it?

I hoped because they loved her, they'd respect her decision even if they disagree. She couldn't know how horribly wrong she was.

7. Chapter 7: Hide and Seek

Chapter 7: Hide and Seek

Rikki was slowly walking to Rikki's thinking about what had happened last night.

Even though she knew how her friends would react, she realized she didn't really care as long as she did what was making her happy. When she reached the cafe, she entered in with a big smile on her face.

Her friends were sitting on their table, in a deep conversation, and she walked in their direction, giving Zane (who had just came out of the office) a small, hidden smile. They saw her smiling and Lewis

teased.

"Is that your "_It's good to be seeing you_" smile, or...?"

"I need to talk to you. It's urgent." Rikki said, pretending she hadn't heard Lewis. "Meet me at Mako."

"What? Now?" Will asked.

She nodded.

They got up from their seats and came out. The boys took Will's boat and the girls dived in.

Once Rikki and the girls reached the moon pool they pulled themselves out and after the curly blond dried them, she started pacing around.

When the boys arrived they all looked at her with curiosity in their eyes.

She looked them in the eyes and said, "Me and Zane got back together."

"What?" They all said in the same time.

"What are you...out your mind?" Cleo asked.

"After all he did to you?" Lewis questioned.

"You can't be serious." Will said.

Bella was the only one who remained silent.

"What about you?" Rikki asked her. "Aren't you going to judge me too?"

She shook her head.

"Why should I? It's your life after all. I love you very much, like my sister, and even if I don't approve it, as long as Zane makes you happy...I guess I should be happy for you."

Rikki looked at her, trying to think about what she'd just heard, because she couldn't believe it. She smiled at her.

"Thanks."

She looked at the others and they looked at her. Cleo was the first to speak.

"I can't believe you got back with him after all he did to you. How could you do this?" She asked with disgust in her voice.

"I did it, because I love him. I'm sorry if that's such a problem to you." Rikki shot back at her.

The brunette looked at the other girl in disbelief.

"He'd hurt you numerous times, and the last time he almost killed

you! And he's gonna hurt you again like he did so many times! He's not for you, Rikki, you should leave him!" She couldn't help but shout.

"He won't hurt me! And even if he does, that's actually none of your business! I love him, and I'd never leave him again!" Rikki shouted back.

"Well, it is my business, because when he hurts you again, I'll be the one comforting you like I always did." Cleo yelled at her.

"Like duh! You never did such thing and you know it! I am not one of those people who'd come crying to the shoulders of their friends and you know it!" Rikki was yelling back at her.

"All I know is you lose it big time, everytime Zane's around you. One day you may blow out our secret because of him!" Cleo yelled frustrated.

Everyone were staring at them fighting, without moving.

"You LIER! I'd never do such thing and you know it! But I can't say the same about you. When Ryan was around you almost blew everything!" Rikki screamed at her face. "You showed him the rock and that led him to Mako and to the moon pool! I told you not to trust him, but of course you didn't listen!"

"That was not my fault! It was Kim's! She told him about Mako! " She fought back.

"Yeah, because he was curious where the rock you showed him is coming from! If I and Will hadn't stopped him in time, who knows what could've happen!" Rikki shouted. "But you didn't care, did you?"

"Of course I cared." She hissed.

"No you did not!", Rikki hissed back. "The only thing you ever cared about was yourself!"

"How could you even say that?" Cleo yelled. "If I cared for something it was you and Emma!"

"That's not true! You knew if it wasn't for me you'd never become a mermaid and you hated me for that! You couldn't stand being around me and I could see it in your eyes!"

Then suddenly the brunette did something nobody ever imagined she'd do. She slapped Rikki across the face and everyone stared at her with shock. She covered her mouth with her hands and tears filled her eyes in disbelief of what she'd just done.

"Oh my god, Rikki, I'm so sorry.." She tried to touch her, but Rikki stepped back.

"DON'T!" She yelled at her rising her hand. Then the curly blond jumped into the moon pool, disappearing in the water.

Cleo sat on the ground and started crying, looking at her hands. She couldn't believe she'd ever do something like that. Lewis hugged her, to calm her down, but she couldn't. She was quietly repeating "What

have I done_ ", through the sobs. Bella took Cleo's hand in hers. Will was just looking at them not knowing what to do. Finally Lewis and Bella managed to calm Cleo down, and they all left Mako.

Back at the cafe, Zane was trying to call Rikki, to hear her voice and find out how her friends reacted when they heard the news, but her voicemail was on. He thought that maybe they were still at Mako so he got back to his work.

The next day was calm, but there was no sign of Rikki or her friends. On the third day, he saw her friends entering the cafe and sitting at one of the tables without looking at him.

He noticed that Derek guy was with them too. He dialed Rikki's number again, but there was no answer, only voicemail.

Zane could sense something was wrong. He went to their table.

"Would you come in the office? I need to talk to you."

Nobody said anything, but still they obeyed. When they entered the office the TV was on, but Zane reduced the volume and turned to them.

"First, I assume Rikki told you about us and I want you to know I'd never do something to hurt her, I'd rather hurt myself first."

Silence met his words.

"And second - why is her phone off? I lost count of how many times I tried to call her and how many messages I left. I tried at her home - nothing. Did something happen at Mako the other day? I know it did. It's not like her to hide like that!"

No one said a word, but Cleo looked at him and the worry was visible at her face.

She nodded quietly.

"You're right. Something did happen at Mako."

Zane looked at her with a grimace of question.

"We had a big fight the other day and I um, I slapped her." Cleo looked down.

"You what?" He shouted.

She didn't say anything else, she was just staring down unable to look him in the eyes.

Zane was looking her in disbelief.

Then Bella stared at something behind him and her eyes widened. Zane turned around to see what she was looking at. The others looked in that direction too and they all froze.

On the upper corner of the news there was a picture of a beautiful blond girl, smiling. Under it there was a title _"Missing without a

trace_. In a flash Zane reached for the remote and turned on the volume, just in time for them to hear the reporter speaking.

"A young girl, living alone with her father, had gone missing without a trace the day before yesterday. She left her home early in the morning to meet some friends and never made it back. Her name's Rikki Chadwick. The police is investigating, but still has no clue what happened to her. If someone has any helpful information about her, please call her father or the hot line. The numbers are..."

Zane turned off the TV and the whole group looked at each other.

Tears were running down Cleo's and Bella's faces. The boys were staring in an unutterable shock.

They stood silent for a couple of minutes, when one of their mobile phones rang. It was Derek's. He took it out from his pocket and his eyes widened when he saw who was calling him.

"Rikki?" He said and he and the others looked at each other.

He picked up, but he turned on the loudspeaker.

"Hello? Rikki?"

But instead of Rikki a cold laughter that seemed like it wasn't human, answered and made them bristle.

"I have something yours. If you want your little friend back alive you'll do everything I say. If you call the police or someone else, she dies." And the call ended.

Silence came into the room.

Derek and Zane were furious and started pacing around. Cleo sat on the sofa and bursted into tears, blaming herself for what had happened. Lewis hugged her, also with tears in his eyes. Bella was on the other corner of the sofa crying in Will's arms. His tears were falling on her head, but she didn't care.

Suddenly someone opened the office door and came in. It was Sophie.

"Zane, this was left for Rikki at the bar."

And she gave him a small white box. He nodded slowly and Sophie went out of the room closing the door behind her. Zane opened the box and couldn't help himself, but drop it on the floor. Tears started running down his face.

When the box hit the ground something fell off it.

Bella and Cleo gasped and put their hands on their mouths. Lewis started shaking, but buried his face in his hands in an unsuccessful attempt to calm down. Will, also shaking, slowly stood up and took the thing in his hand.

It was a beautiful blue crystal necklace, covered with something red.

Blood.

Derek who realized he was the only one who didn't understand what that meant, looked at their faces and one single question popped from his mouth.

"What the hell is that?"

The others looked at each other thinking the same thing; it was time. He had to find out everything.

8. Chapter 8: A matter of perspective

Chapter 8: A matter of perspective

Rikki opened her eyes and slowly got off the floor.

Her head was ponding. It was dark and she realized she was probably at a basement in something that looked like a cell.

She looked around.

There were a couple of cells like hers, but they were empty and each had a small circle window at the top. At the other end of the basement there was only one door with a camera on its upper corner.

Suddenly she heard a sound behind her and turned around in a flash.

There was a girl behind her. Probably at the age of fifteen. She had buried her head in her knees and was crying quietly.

"Are you ok?" Rikki asked her.

The girl didn't respond only lifted her head and looked at the curly blond. Rikki noticed her eyes were light green and full of tears.

"What's your name?" She asked her trying to sound gentle.

"Rebecca." The little girl answered inbetween a few sobs and hiccups.

Rikki felt bad for that girl. She could see the fear in her innocent eyes and how terrified she probably was. The curly blond realized how fragile the little girl was. She probably was one of those kids who had a perfect life with their parents happily married and with lots of friends.

Friends.

The word echoed in the curly blond's mind and suddenly her thoughts were pacing now around her own life and so-called "friends".

She still couldn't believe what Cleo had done. She could never imagine the brunette of all people would do such thing!

Rikki shook my head to clear her thoughts. She didn't want to think

about Cleo right now.

She looked back at the girl. She didn't know her at all so she couldn't know if she'd deserved that and besides the curly blond wasn't good at all the comforting-kind-of stuff, but she knew she had to do something to help the girl calm down.

After a bit of a hesitation Rikki walked over to her and kneeled down, putting one of her hands on her shoulders.

"My name's Rikki. I don't know what happened to you to us, but everything will be ok." She told the girl looking her right into the eyes. "I promise you, I'll get us both out of here!"

And Rikki tried to give her a small smile. For a second the girl didn't say a word, then all of a sudden she threw herself in the curly blond's arms, hugging her tight. Rikki was so shocked she couldn't do anything else but pat her awkwardly on the shoulders. The girl then let go of the hug and sat back on the floor.

For a few moments no one said a word. Then it was Rikki who spoke up first.

"What the hell is this place? What are we doing here?"

"I don't know." The girl shook her head and shrugged.

The curly blond turned her back to her and started pacing around. Everything in her head about how she had gotten there was a bit blurry, but still she tried hard to remember.

Flashback:

Rikki was swimming as fast as she could, her only wish to be further from the person she used to call her best friend. Tears had started to form in her eyes, but she ignored them easily because she was in the water.

_When she finally reached the shore she went to her secret place to pull out and dry herself. She stood up on her feet and started pacing around, because as soon as she'd left the water she felt the anger filling her again. _

She didn't know who she was more furious at: Cleo for slapping her, or her for falling into that stupid fight in the first place. Filled with anger and deep in her thoughts she didn't hear the steps coming behind her until they were too close. She turned around to see who dared to come to her private place. It was a man in black. Or at least she thought it was a man. She couldn't tell exactly.

End of flash back

Rikki tried to remember something else, but she just couldn't. Without realizing it she had curled her fingers into fists and the temperature in the room was getting higher. She quickly relaxed her hands and the heat stopped.

"How did you do that?" She heard a voice behind her.

The curly blond jumped, having completely forgotten Becca was there. She was looking at Rikki's hands and then at her eyes.

"How did I do what? I didn't do anything!" Rikki said fooling her and with a tone that made it clear she didn't want to talk about it.

She turned her back to the other girl, closing her eyes.

That was a too close call. Then she went to one of the walls, sat down and leaned back to it with a sigh.

"Are you scared?" The curly blond heard Rebecca asking her and she turned my head to face her.

It seemed the little girl was beginning to really calm down.

"Why do you ask?" Rikki asked her back.

"It's just since you came in consciousness, you looked angry, annoyed, and everything else, but scared. I mean you just seemed so in control. And I just wondered that's all."

"I don't know." Rikki admitted.

"It must be so cool." Rebecca said with a smile.

"Pardon?"

"Not to be scared, I mean."

"I think it's just a matter of perspective." The curly bloned joked with a smile and they both laughed.

"You seem like a very nice girl." Becca said after a while.

"Thanks."

"You probably have a lot of friends, unlike me."

"Not exactly. I have only a few, but they mean everything to me." Rikki said with a sigh. "I wish they'd feel that way about me too."

"You mean they don't?"

"I don't know. I used to think so, but I'm not so sure anymore."

"Their loss." The teenager smiled to Rikki.

"Thank you." Rikki smiled back.

She reached to her necklace with her hand, but it was gone. She jumped on her feet and started looking around. She then turned to Rebecca.

"However it happened, did I had a crystal necklace around my neck when I got here? " The curly blond asked her.

"I don't think so, no." Becca answered slightly confused.

"Why?"

Rikki didn't answer.

"Damn!" The curly blond murmured to herself and hit the wall with her fists.

A flash of light appeared in the cell and Becca jumped on her place. She looked at Rikki. This time she knew the curly blond had done it, and she couldn't be fooled.

Rikki gathered all her strength to stay calm, watching the other girl's lips move to pop the question.

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"What the hell is that?" Derek asked looking at the crystal necklace.

Zane looked at his face, then at the others. Their looks were telling him they should tell Derek the whole truth, but he didn't want to.

"I know what you're thinking and it's not a good idea." Zane said.

"Zane-" Cleo started through her tears, but he interrupted her.

"Don't! How could you do that to Rikki? She values you, Bella and Emma more than anything else in this world, even me! And you just slapped her?" He felt a wave of anger inside him.

"Zane, please, I-" Cleo tried again, but a new portion of tears choked her up.

He turned his back to her, and started pacing around again. He had to save Rikki! But how?! He ran to the door and opened it.

"Sophie, come here." He yelled.

She obeyed in the minute. Zane closed the door behind her and went to his desk picking the white box where Rikki's necklace was.

"Who left that for Rikki? Please try to remember, it's very important."

"I don't know. I was making a juice and when I turned around in was on the bar. Why?"

"I justâ€¦had to know." Zane said. "So you didn't see anyone suspicious?"

"No." The read-head said. "Wait, I did actually. When I saw that on the bar I looked around and I caught a glimpse of a man in black, to run out of the cafÃ©."

"A man in black?" Zane said exchanging looks with the others.

"I think it was a man, but I'm not sure. He was covered in black all over, so it was really hard to tell."

"Ok, thank you, you can go back to work." He said and opened the door.

But just when she was about to leave, something on her hand sparkled under the sunlight coming from the window. Zane wouldn't have noticed it, because he had turned his back to her, but right in that moment Will teased her.

"Soph, what's that on your finger, did you get engaged without telling me?"

When Zane heard him he turned around. In a flash he was holding her wrist and was shaking roughly her hand in front of her face.

"Where did you get that from?" He asked Sophie raising his voice.

"I bought it." She lied.

"Liar! Admit it, you stole it from my room!" He shouted and took the ring off her finger roughly.

Zane then walked away from her in the other corner of the room, behind his desk, as further as possible.

"Soph, is this true?" Will asked her. "Did you really stole that ring from him?"

At first she didn't say anything, but then she started shouting.

"So what if I did? You were going to give it to that bitch, weren't you?"

"Don't EVER call Rikki like that infront of me!" Zane yelled at her and hit the desk with his fist.

Sophie jumped a bit and a grimace of fear ran through her face.

"Get out of here, you're fired!" He hissed at her.

She stormed out of the office. Derek closed the door behind her.

Bella looked at him, then at Zane and spoke up.

"Derek you should know something about Rikki, Cleo and me."

Zane looked at her with anger on his face, but she just gave him an we-have-to-tell-him-eventually look so he went and plopped down on the sofa next to her. He nodded to her and trying to sound as calmly as he could, he said, "Go on, then. Tell him."

And he sighed, turning to look at Derek.

"You should sit down, you know. You shouldn't be standing up when you hear what we have to say to you."

To his surprise Derek obeyed and sat down on the chair behind the

desk. He looked at them with curiosity.

"Come on, spill it out, what is it?"

Bella and Cleo took a deep breath and started telling him everything. Zane was observing his reactions. The whole time Derek seemed calm and like it wasn't a big deal. Unlike him when he first found out. "A matter of perspective", Zane thought bitterly.

The only time when Derek reacted amazed and worried was when they told him about their necklaces. He looked at the white box and finally realized why they were so shocked when they saw it.

"So this is hers?" He asked and Zane sensed something in his voice.
Fear.

"Yes." He was the one to answer. "But I thought you'd have noticed it on your little date." He tried to keep his voice calm, but the anger and the jealousy in it were easily sensible.

To his surprise Derek turned as white as sheet.

"Is everything alright with you?" Bella asked him, but he didn't answer.

He looked at all of them and Zane could see the panic in his eyes. He had the feeling Derek knew something he wasn't telling them.

"Is something wrong?" Zane asked him, looking right at his eyes.

Derek closed his eyes and hit the desk with his fist.

"It's all my fault." He said and he opened his eyes looking straight at the others. "She's in danger all because of me."

9. Chapter 9: Honesty

Chapter 9: Honesty

When Derek said it was all his fault, everybody looked at him, like he was some kind of criminal. He tried not to pay attention at that, but he knew they were right.

Maybe not consciously, but he really was a kind of criminal.

Derek hesitated. He wasn't sure if he wanted to tell them, but they were completely honest with him. He owed them the truth and he knew it.

"What do you mean it's all your fault?" Cleo asked wiping her tears and looking straight at him.

Before speaking he took a deep breath.

"Look, there's a reason for me to come here. I'm being haunted. And Rikki knew that. She didn't know why, or who was chasing me, but all she wanted was to help me, and I agreed." He buried his face in his hands, because he couldn't look them in the eyes.

Especially Zane.

"You mean you consciously put her life in danger? How could you do that?" Zane asked Derek getting really angry.

"You know what Rikki's like. When she wants something she doesn't give up."

"Exactly!" Zane said. "You shouldn't have told her you were been chased in the first place!" He started yelling.

"She trusts me completely. I didn't want to lie to her and lose her trust!" Derek stated defensively.

"Well now it doesn't matter, because in order not to lose her trust, you might lose her!" Zane yelled and buried his face in his hands.

"Derek, please tell us the whole truth. Who is haunting you, and why? And was he or she the one on the phone?" Bella told me calmly.

"It's complicated, because it's not exactly male, but yes, he was the one on the phone." Derek said.

He took a deep breath and started talking.

"In South Africa, back when Rikki was still living there and we still had our little gang and were hanging out, I was known as the local "bad" boy of Johannesburg. But when she left the town with her father I somehow changed. I missed her so much, that I found myself tired of being the tough guy anymore. I was too weak. I just wanted to carry on with my normal life so I left the gang. But my glory of a "bad" boy remained. Then one day a man came to me. A man called Sean. He told me he needed my help for something."

"Your help?" Cleo raised her eyebrows. "For what?"

"In Johannesburg there was a big organization called "Octopus" with an evil leader. Its goal was to become the world's biggest force." Derek continued, but this time Zane interrupted him.

"I still don't get what's that got to do with Rikki."

"You'll see. Just hear it all." Derek answered him and continued speaking.

"They had been doing experiments on an innocent people. They had injected them with an ampule full with a deadly virus. Once the ampule degraded, the virus would spread straight into their blood. At that point they would need a medication, or they had only 48 hours of life or less. Only that organization had the medicine that can cure the virus, but once someone has taken it, he has to continue having it for a lifetime. He stops, he dies. However, they also possessed a machine made by them that can cure the virus forever. They had injected about 20 people with those ampules containing the virus. Their plan was to spread those 20 people all over the world, so when the virus spreads in their organism, they would become a danger. It is only transferred in blood, though. When they infect other people, because it's necessarily, it would become an epidemic."

and the organization would announce it had a cure for it and everyone would want to pay for it."

"What I don't get what's your part in all this." Lewis said.

"The help that man wanted from me was to help him and his people find those 20 people that were injected and isolate them. And we did it. I helped him to do it in time. But the leader of that organization found out what we did and ordered her people to kill us. Everyone was killed except for me. I ran away and came here." Derek finished his story and looked at them.

They were all too shocked to say a word. For a few seconds there was complete silence in the room.

"Her people?" Bella was the first to speak. "The leader of "Octopus" is a woman?"

Derek nodded.

"So, now her people kidnapped Rikki to use her as bait in order to get you?" Zane said, barely keeping down his anger.

"Not quite." Derek said. "There's something else."

"You mean there's more?" Will asked.

"While I was helping Sean, I found out that the leader of "Octopus" Kyra Blakely..is Rikki's mother."

"What!?" The others shouted at once.

"But Rikki told us, her mother left her and her father when she was 4-"

"Because Rikki's dad was poor and all she wanted was money. Yeah. Well, now she has money. Lot's of it. And if her plan had succeeded, she would be the richest person in the world."

"I don't get it." Zane said still so shocked that it was noticeable his anger was gone. "What's all this got to do with Rikki and why would Kyra kidnap her own daughter? Not that she could be called exactly a "mother", but it doesn't make sense."

"I don't know why, but she wants to keep Rikki and Rebecca very close to her."

"Rebecca?" Bella asked. "Who's Rebecca?"

"When Kyra left Rikki and her dad, she was pregnant. Rebecca is Rikki's fifteen-year-old sister."

"What!?"

"But why would Kyra kidnap her own two daughters?" Cleo questioned.

"Who knows why, she's crazy!" Derek said. "But it's my fault she has Rikki."

"How is that your fault?" Lewis asked.

"If she has her people spying on me, they did it on my date with Rikki too." Derek said looking down.

"Would she hurt Rikki?" Zane asked, getting off the couch. "Would she hurt her own daughter?"

"Maybe, I don't know. I have no idea what she's going to do now."

"Then we better find Rikki fast!" Zane stormed off the office and everybody ran after him.

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"How the hell did you do that?" Becca was looking at Rikki, straight in the eyes.

"It doesn't matter, it's not your business and besides it won't happen again." Rikki told her, looking her back in the eyes.

"It's not my business? Excuse me, but if I'm going to be fried out or hit by a flashlight, I think it is my business!" She said.

"Well, if that's going to make you relax, I'm not going to do anything to you, ok?" Rikki shot her and turned her back to her.

She walked to the wall and leaned her back against it, running through her hair with her hands. She had to calm down.

Becca walked to the opposite wall, sat down and leaned to the wall, crossing her legs.

Rikki closed her eyes and took a few deep breathes, not knowing Becca was watching her.

Rebecca was watching Rikki and was thinking about her and about what she had witnessed. She knew something was going on, and that the curly blond had caused the big heating of the room and then the lightening. It was like she had some strange powers.

Rikki closed her eyes and breathed heavily. She was hiding something, but somehow Becca liked that.

She knew she probably should be freaking out right now, that she's locked up with a strange person like Rikki, but Becca was amazed to find out that not only she was cool with it, but somehow she even liked it.

While she was observing her face, she realized it was familiar to her. Like she'd seen her somewhere before. Probably on a photo or somewhere else, but she couldn't remember.

And there was something more.

Ever since that hug she had given to Rikki when she was comforting her, Becca felt weird closeness to her. Like, she'd known her for a long time now. Like, she'd known her for a lifetime.

But it was impossible.

She tried to clean her head from these thoughts. Then she heard a noise and both her and Rikki stared at the only door in their small "prison".

A woman walked in. Becca's mother.

Becca couldn't believe it! She was about to say something, but Rikki was faster.

"_You_?" She yelled.

A grimace of shock and most of all anger went through Rikki's face. The shock passed away quickly, but the anger remained.

Becca's mother made a few steps towards her, but Rikki stepped back and Becca could see the anger filling her all over. Becca's mother turned her face to her.

"Becca, I see you met your..._sister_."

"_What_?" Her and Rikki yelled at the same time and looked at each other and then at their mother.

"It's true." Their mother said. "You are sisters."

"You mean she's another child you abandoned?" Rikki hissed, anger taking control of her.

"_What_?!" Becca shouted and looked at both Rikki and her mother.
"What is she talking about, mother?"

"You mean you don't know?" Rikki asked and then turned to their mother. "Well go on, tell her!"

Becca looked at their mother and for the first time of her whole life she saw a bit of fear coming across her face. She was still quiet when Rikki started yelling at her.

"What are you waiting for? Tell her how you abandoned your daughter fifteen years ago! Tell her how you abandoned me and my dad, because you were craving for money, when I was only four years old!"

Becca couldn't believe her ears. She couldn't believe her mother was capable of such thing. She turned to her, looking right into the eyes.

"Tell me it's not true!" Rebecca said feeling anger filling her.
"Tell me she's lying!"

But when Kyra didn't say anything Becca found her answer.

"I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!" She shouted and turned her back to her mother for a moment.

Rikki laughed at how fragile their mother looked.

"What happened to you all of a sudden?" The curly blond yelled with anger. "You suddenly care now?" She hissed.

"Rikki, please!" Kyra started, but she interrupted her.

"NO! WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE TO MESS WITH OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES? FIRST YOU ABANDON ME, AND NOW AFTER 15 YEARS YOU RETURN AND KIDNAP ME? WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU AND WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?!" Rikki started shouting losing control.

"I knew this was a mistake." Kyra murmured under her nose and walked out of the basement.

Suddenly everything had become a complete mess.

Becca sat on the floor, buring her face in her hands, and tears started rolling down her cheeks. This whole situation was just too much for her to handle. Rikki was furious and out of her skin from anger. She was pacing around fast, hitting the walls and the cells. Finally she slammed down on the floor, leaning her head against the wall, and putting her hands on her knees, breathing hard.

No one said a word for the next couple of hours.

When Becca looked up through the window she saw the stars and realized it was already night out there.

Rikki was sitting in the same position, but her eyes her closed and Becca had no idea if she sleeping or just thinking. She moved a bit closer to the curly blond and observed her face, noticing two small traces of dry tears on her cheeks.

Rebecca couldn't imagine how Rikki was feeling, but she knew how she herself felt. She was furious at their mother and never wanted to see her again. But at the same time she was really happy to have such strong, brave and beautiful big sister like Rikki.

Becca admired her so much ever since she came in consciousness and comforted her, and all she wanted now was just to get to know her, to find out more about her. She hoped the curly blond wouldn't be angry at her for what their mother did to her, or for her having their mom to raise her, when Rikki had that chance taken away from her.

They were both victims of their mother's lies and devotion to money after all.

Becca hesitated for a moment, but then she gently rested her head on her shoulder. Right now she just wanted to be close to her and feel the curly blond next to herself.

Rikki didn't move, she didn't do anything. "So, she's asleep", Becca thought. Suddenly the curly blond opened her eyes and turned her head to looked at the other girl, studying her face. Rebecca could see the anger and the frustration in Rikki's beautiful blue eyes. They were like that for a seconds then Rikki closed her eyes and leaned her head against the wall again. Becca closed her eyes too.

That night no one said anything else. Well, nothing else was left to say after all.

Once again the truth prevailed. Because of the honesty of the person

Rebecca was imprisoned with, but was now proud to call..her _sister_.

10. Chapter 10: Me & You

Chapter 10: Me & You

After all he had heard Zane couldn't just sit down and wait. He ran out of the room, and the others following him close after.

"Zane, Zane, wait!" Cleo shouted at him, almost out of breath, but he didn't listen.

Will who was faster than everyone else, caught his arm and the other boy had to stop.

"Do you even know where you're going?" He asked Zane.

"To save Rikki!" Zane shouted at his face.

"You don't even know where that woman is keeping her." Bella tried to reason him.

"Then I'm going to find out." Zane said quickly.

"How?" Cleo asked him.

Zane turned to look at her because he wanted to say something, but he couldn't. He realized he had no idea. Suddenly a thought came to my mind and he took out his phone, dialing a number.

"Dad, it's me. Please, meet me at Mako in an hour. I have to talk to you about something really important and it can't wait. Ok, thanks, see you there!"

He then hung up and looked at them. They were all staring at him.

"What?" Zane raised his eyebrows at them angrily.

"What are you up to?" Lewis asked him.

"My father is a very powerful businessman. He has connections almost everywhere in Australia. Maybe he can help us." Zane explained.

"That actually is a really good idea!" Bella said surprising him and the others.

They looked at each other, but didn't lose time and went straight to Mako Island to meet Zane's father. On the way there only one thing was in Zane's mind; to find Rikki and save her.

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When Rebecca woke up the sun was already shining.

She lifted her head and looked at Rikki. The curly blond was still sleeping, her head leaned to the side of one of her shoulders. One of

her curls was falling over her face, making her look even more beautiful.

Becca smiled.

She was happy that Rikki was her sister. She yawned and stretched her hands, before looking at her sister again.

Rikki's face had changed. It had some kind of a worried expression. Her fingers were trembling slightly on the floor. She then started murmuring something nervously in her sleep, in the beginning quiet, then louder until Becca could make out clear words like "Cleo" and "Mako". She realized her sister was probably having some kind of a bad dream.

Rebecca wondered who that Cleo must be. Probably her sister's friend. All of a sudden she felt a bit jealous. Rikki had told her that she had a couple of friends, best friends, but now the thought her sister might love her friends so much hurt Becca. She wished someday Rikki would feel the same way about her. They are sisters after all.

Suddenly Rikki opened her eyes and looked around then looked at Becca. The curly blond stood up on her feet and looked at the sun shining through the small window. Becca didn't know what to say or what to do and Rikki was the first to speak.

"This doesn't change anything." She said not bothering to turn around.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean us. Being sisters. It doesn't change a thing." Rikki turned around to look at Becca.

"How can you even say that? It changes everything!" Becca looked at her eyes with tears in her own.

She was so hurt by what the curly blond had said. How could she just say something like that?!

"No, it doesn't. I have a life out there, and you have too. As soon as we get out of here we'll carry on with our lives as if nothing happened." Rikki said.

Tears started rolling down Becca's cheeks.

"We're sisters!" She yelled to the other girl. "And even if you can carry on pretending nothing happened, I can't. Besides it looks like we'll be closed in here for a very long time. I don't think we'll be going out any time soon."

"You're wrong. I'll get us both out of here." Rikki said and stretched her hand towards the door.

But before she did anything else however, she turned around to look at Becca.

"You must swear you will never ever tell anyone what you're going to see!"

"Ok." Becca nodded.

Rikki turned around to the door again and curled her fingers against the locker. A stench of molten steel spread out in the cell. After a few second Rikki pushed the door open. She did the same with the door that was the exit of the basement they've been kept in.

They then carefully went through the door and up the stairs where Rikki stopped dead in her tracks. She thought she's been thrown into a dream. Her and Becca were standing in an old and beautiful big house. And from what they could see, they were the only ones there.

Rikki was looking around in something between shock and awe. She'd never seen a house like that one before. She made a few steps to take a better look at the room they were in. It had white walls and white, leather furniture. There was a glass table with a bottle of scotch with two empty glasses on it. At the other side of the room there were stairs that were leading to the up level.

"I can't believe this." Becca breathed, causing Rikki to turn around and look at her. "We're at our mother's house."

Without hesitation Rikki quickly ran upstairs to find her mother's room.

"Rikki!" Becca yelled and ran after her.

Upstairs there were many doors, so Rikki just pushed open the first one.

It was leading to a bedroom with one big bed, a wardrobe and a nightstand. One the nightstand there was a photo. Rikki quickly walked over to it and picked the photo up. It was a close up of her mother. Anger filled the curly blond and she threw the picture in the ground. Its frame broke on million pieces. But something else caught her attention. She reached for the broken frame. Behind the photo of her mother, there was yet another photo.

A photo of a 4-year-old girl with her dad on the beach. They were both smiling.

Rikki squeezed her eyes close for a moment, taking a deep breath and opened them again just when someone entered the room. She looked up and realized it was her mother.

Kyra froze when she saw Rikki holding the old photo in her hand.

"What are you doing here? How did you escape?" She asked both Rikki and Becca but the curly blond couldn't say anything.

She was just staring at her mother.

"Give me that." Her mother said and tried to pull the photo out of Rikki's hands. Her skin touched the curly blond's and the contact made Rikki tremble. In a heartbeat she felt so many things she couldn't even describe and when her mother moved her hands and the touch of their skin was broken, all the things Rikki had felt

disappeared as quickly as they had rushed through her.

"How is it you have a picture of me and my father? Have you been keeping it all those years?"

Tears filled her mother's eyes.

"This was the only memory of you I had." She said, and a tear rolled down her cheek. "And I didn't want to lose it."

Becca also had tears in her eyes, but she wasn't watching their mother, she was observing Rikki. The curly blond didn't know what to say so she just rushed past her mother towards the door, when her mother said something that made her stop dead in her tracks.

"I'm sorry."

Rikki was so shocked that she turned to look at her.

"What?"

"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry for leaving you and your dad. I should've never done that."

"It's too late for that, isn't it?" Rikki had come to her contious again. "The past is said and done and your aplogize won't change anything. I have one question, though. Why? Why did you do it?" Rikki's blue orbiths pierced her mother's dark ones.

"I can't tell you." She said.

"Don't! Don't you dare to say that." Rikki yelled at her.

Her mother covered her face with her hands and her sleeves slipped down uncovering loads of severe bruises, some of which were newly made and many wounds. Rikki's eyes widened. Rebecca gasped covering her mouth with her hands.

"What the hell had happened to you?" Rikki asked her mother.

"Nothing." Her mother lied and tried to pull back her sleeves, but the curly blond caught her arm.

"You're hiding something." She stated. "You're covering for someone."

"No!" Her mother gulped, but the panic in her voice gave her away.

"You're being abused, aren't you?!" It wasn't a question. It was a statement.

Her mother shook her head frantically, giving out her panic. Suddenly her eyes widened as she stared at something behind Rikki. The curly blond spun around to find herself face to face with a man that had just entered the room. He laughed at the scene before him. A laugh, cold and full with hate, like it wasn't human.

"The two birds had flied out of the cage, I see." He said moving his

eyes between Rikki and Rebecca, who in her panic stepped closer to her mother. Rikki moved stood in front of both of them protectively, facing the man.

"Who are you, what do you want?" She asked him.

"So, you don't know?" He asked with a smirk. "I'm your grandfather." He stated.

"You're my _what_?" Rikki asked, her eyes wide open.

"How did you escape?" He asked, making a step closer to the curly blond.

"Why does it matter?" She lifted her eyebrows, her blue eyes piercing him.

The anger was filling her again. It seemed he liked that she wasn't giving up and the way she was fighting back at his words.

"You're very pretty, you know that?" He suddenly said. "You remind me of_ her_." And he looked over to her mother.

Again he came even closer. He tried to touch Rikki's leg, but she caught his arm shoving him away off her.

"Stay away from me!" She shouted at him. Then Rikki realized something. "You did that to my mother, didn't you? You were the one who abused her!"

He didn't say anything, only smirked at her.

"Well done. I see you've not only inherited your mother's beauty but also her brains." He said.

"You made her leave me and my dad, didn't you?" Rikki hissed at him. "And the one who kidnapped me and Rebecca locking us down in the basement wasn't her, was it?! It was you."

"Did you tell her?" He spat at her mother, trying to get to her, but Rikki pushed him back.

"Stay away from her!" Rikki shouted.

He angrily caught Rikki's arm roughly, pulling her close to him. Before he could do anything she curled the fingers of her free hand into a fist and made him let go of my arm.

"What the bloody hell was that?" He cried in pain, staring at his burned hand. He ran towards her, but she curled my fingers again and this time burned his face causing him to trip over his own feet and fall on the floor.

The curly blond used the opportunity and turned back to Becca and their mother whispering quietly "Go!" and pushed them to the door. They all got out of the room but they heard Rikki's grandfather getting off the floor and they all turned to look at him. He took out a gun and pointed it at Rikki.

"You really pissed me off you know?! You're going to get what you

deserve little bitch!" He shouted.

Suddenly everything went into slow motion. He cleaned off the guard, but before he pulled the trigger Rikki felt someone brushing her shoulder and she saw her mother moving to stand in front of her.

"_No_!" Rikki and Becca both shouted simultaneously.

The sound of a gunfire echoed and Kyra was thrown backwards, chest covered in blood, but before she hit the floor Rikki caught her in her hands. Tears started running down Kyra's face. She lifted her hand and fondled Rikki's cheek.

"Why did you do that?" The curly blond asked her, not realizing her voice was shaking. Her mother smiled at her.

"You're my daughter. I did it because I love you." She whispered. "I've always loved you and I've missed you every single day. There wasn't a single minute without regretting that I let this demon made me leave you and your father. I've never forgive myself for not being there to watch you grow up. But Terry did great with raising you alone, you know?! You've turned into the bravest and most beautiful girl. And I'm so proud of you!"

She was looking Rikki right into her blue eyes and Rikki was looking right back into her dark ones.

"I forgive you." Rikki said all of a sudden. "I forgive you for leaving me and my dad. Just don't do that again, ok?!"

Her mother kissed her forehead and smiled at her.

"I promise I'll always be with you."

Then she took Becca's hand and put it in the curly blond's.

"Love your sister and take care for her. She needs you."

"Ok." Rikki nodded. "I promise."

Kyra smiled at her and Becca for one last time and her eyes shut close, with one last tear sliding out of them. Her hands thudded to the floor and she moved no more.

Becca bursted into tears and Rikki just stood there with her mother's lifeless body in her arms. Right then and there the curly blond realized how much her mother loved her and that she'd never forgiven herself for abandoning her when she was a child. Now, however, her mother had redeemed her guilt giving her life to save Rikki's. Leaving her daughter...again.

The curly blond's crystal blue orbiths filled with wetness, and one small tear slid down her cheek, before she could try to stop it.

11. Chapter 11: Wounded But Not Destroyed

Chapter 11: Wounded But Not Destroyed

Zane and the others didn't have to wait long for his father, because as soon as they got to Mako, he was there.

"Dad, we really need your help." Zane said without wasting time.

"What for?" Harrison asked.

"Rikki's been kidnapped." Zane said. "And we need to find her."

"I don understand what's that go to do with me?" Harrison raised his eyebrows.

"You've got some conections and power. You can make a few calls and at least help me find where she is. Please, do it for me." It was the first time Zane was begging his father or anyone else for that matter.

"Of course, I'll help you, Zane. You're my son. I've done some pretty bad and stupid things in the past, but I'll do anything for you. Before I do anything, however, I need you to tell me what exactly do you know about Rikki's kidnapping. Then I'll see who I can call to help us."

Zane nodded and started talking fast. The others were just sitting in silence. Only Derek spoke a couple of times to help the other boy with the parts of the story Zane couldn't exactly remember.

"Wait, Rikki's mother, how did you say was her name again?"

"Kyra Blakely." Zane repeated. "Why?"

"I think I know her. Yeah in fact I do. I've been invited to a party at her house once before." Harrison stated.

"Do you remember the way so you can take us there?" Zane asked him.

"Sure." Harrison nodded and they all left Mako.

Back on the main they took Harrison's van and went straight at that Kyra Blakely's house. On their way there Zane's dad called the cops. Zane just hoped Rikki was there and they weren't too late.

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Rikki felt anger filling her all over.

She stood up off the floor and looked at the man who had taken her mother away from her..again. She made a step towards him. Becca was still crying but now she looked up at both of them with fear written on her face. Their grandfather started laughing. He was still holding the gun in his handand was pointing it straight at Rikki's chest.

The curly blond didn't care. She didn't even tremble.

"Your mother was so stupid. She gave her life thinking she'll save yours. But she was wrong." Her grandfather stated looking straight in

the eyes.

"How dare you speak against my mother?!" Rikki hissed angrily.

"Has anyone ever told you you're cute when you're mad?" Her grandfather laughed.

The words echoed in Rikki's mind but said by someone else. A person she now realized she truly loved. The image of him floated right before her eyes for a moment. Then the curly blond remembered her whole life and the mess it was, before she'd met him.

Rikki then remembered something her dad had told her when her mom had left them both, "When we love, we may get wounded lots of times, but while this love is living in our hearts, we would never be destroyed, because we'll have the greatest weapon we could ever ask for".

She stretched her hand towards her grandfather and curled her fingers against the gun. It heated up so much, that it started melting right in his hands and he dropped it on the floor. He looked at the curly blond and for first time, fear ran through his face.

At that single moment they heard someone shouting Rikki's name from downstairs, and she felt her heart jumped in her chest.

"_Rikki_!"

"_Zane_?!" She yelled back and ran to the handrail, to look down the stairs.

He was there with the others and someone the curly blond was shocked to see; his father. When Zane saw her, he ran upstairs and took her in his embrace, holding her tight. She could feel his heart was beating like crazy.

"Thank god you're ok!" He said, placing a kiss on top of her head.

When Zane pulled from the hug he looked around and saw the crying Becca and their mother's lifeless body. Rikki's grandfather was just staring at them. The others came running upstairs.

"What the hell happened here?" Zane asked looking at Rikki.

But before she could answer she felt movement behind her.

Everything happened so fast, she couldn't assume it 'till it was over.

It seemed when they weren't looking at him her grandfather had managed to find a knife and now he gathered all his strength at Rikki, but Derek who was standing closer was faster. He jumped in front of Rikki, covering her with his body. Instead of her, Rikki's grandfather stabbed him in the back.

"Derek, _no_!" Rikki screamed.

She tried to catch him in her arms but he was too heavy for her and pulled her down to the ground when he fell on the floor.

Will jumped and took the knife from Rikki's grandfather's hands, throwing it away.

"Someone call an ambulance!" Rikki yelled and Lewis quickly took out his phone, dialing the emergency number.

She looked at Derek's face. He stretched his hand and fondled her cheek.

"Derek, hold on, please hold on." She said.

"I love you." He whispered. "Whatever happens, please remember that!" He said, giving her a faint smile, that disappeared too fast.

Rikki could feel his heartbeat getting weaker. He was giving up and she somehow knew that.

"No! Not you too! Please not you!" She cried and one tear fell down her cheek. She couldn't lose him too. "Please, stay with me! Please! Don't leave me!"

Then she heard sirens of an ambulance and of police cars. A door opened downstairs and a bunch of people rushed in. The policemen arrested her grandfather.

The paramedics took Derek.

"I want to go with him." Rikki told them.

"Are you related to him?" One of them asked her.

"I...I'm his sister." The curly blond lied.

"Fine. You can come in the ambulance then."

She nodded and turned around to the others.

Zane was next to her ready to go with her, but Rikki shook her head. She looked at Cleo, Bella, Lewis and Will, who were trying to help Rebecca calm down and then at Zane again.

"Guys, would you take care of Rebecca for me? Take her to the cafeteria, I'll meet you there after I go to the hospital." She told them all and they nodded.

But before she turned around to go in the ambulance Becca ran to her and threw herself in her arms.

"I love you, big sis." She said when she released from the hug.
"You're the only family I've got left."

Rikki gave her a faint smile and gave a kiss to Zane. Then she turned around and climbed into the ambulance, taking Derek's hand in hers.

He was still conscious and he smiled at her. When they got to the hospital he was rushed to surgery, and after about an hour of waiting Rikki was told which room he's been moved to and that she could go and see him. She went to his room and sat on the chair next to his

bed, taking his hand in hers.

"I don't know what I'd have done if I had lost you! You're my best friend from childhood, my brother and you mean the world to me." She whispered in his ear.

She then leaned and kissed him on the cheek. One tear fell from her eyes but she brushed it off.

"I have to go now." She said and did something even she hadn't imagine she'd ever do; she leaned and gently touched his lips with hers.

Then she walked away from his room and from the hospital.

While the curly blond was walking on her way to the cafÃ©, she breathed the cold night air and allowed her thoughts to run wild.

She had to bring her life back to normal again. Just when she'd finally got her mother back she'd lost her forever and it really hurt. But her father was right. She was wounded, but she was not destroyed.

She had the perfect boyfriend, a little sister and the most amazing and loyal friends.

"And as for Derek, he would be fine", Rikki thought.

He had to be.

12. Chapter 12: Lightening of life

Chapter 12: Lightening of life

Before Rikki walked into the cafÃ© she stopped for a moment and breathed the cold night air.

She had made a decision in her head and now she had to tell Zane the others. The curly blond shut her eyes close for a second, then opened them again and walked in.

They were all sitting on one of the tables next to the bar. Cleo and Bella were talking to Rebecca who now seemed to be a bit better. Lewis and Will were also in a deep conversation. Zane was holding a cup of tea in his hands and was deep in his thoughts.

When Rikki walked over to them they all looked at her and she stared back at all of them. Before she could say anything, Bella spoke to her.

"What happened, how is Derek?" She asked her.

"He'll be fine." Rikki said, trying to smile. "Listen, guys, I've got something I want to tell you."

Her tone was so serious the others all looked at her worried.

"I'm leaving tomorrow." Was all she said.

"_What_?" They all asked her at the same time.

They were looking at Rikki shocked and confused.

"I need to go away for a while. I need to take a little time off from everything and to figure out what to do with my life from now on." The curly blond explained.

Cleo, who was closet to her jumped off her seat and threw herself in Rikki's arms. Bella followed her.

"Please, stay." They both said, tears running down their faces.

"I'm sorry." Rikki told them. "I have to go."

The curly blond looked at the others. Becca was also crying, Lewis and Will were totally shocked, and Zane had pain written all over his face. He got up from his seat and gently kissed her.

"Is there anything I can do to make you stay?" He asked her.

Rikki shook her head. He hugged her and she felt tears filling my eyes. She gently pulled out from the hug and fondled his cheek.

"I love you." She said quietly.

He smiled and Rikki realized his eyes were full of tears too. He took something out of his pocket and opened the palm of his hand, stretching it to her.

"I forgot to give it back to you."

Rikki couldn't help but smile.

"My necklace!" She said. "How come you have it in you?" She asked him.

"Long story." He said and Rikki just nodded. "Here, allow me." He added and put it around her neck.

"Thanks." She told him and turned to look at him. "It feels right to have it back."

He kissed her again, and one tear rolled down his cheek.

"I don't want you to go. I love you so much, I can't live without you." He said.

"I love you with all my heart. Always have. Always will." Rikki said and gave him a smile, kissing him on the cheek.

Then she turned to the others. She hugged Lewis and Will, then Bella and then she turned to Cleo.

"I'm sorry." She said and the brunette looked at her through her tears, her eyes wide open in shock. "For fighting with you the other day. You tried to tell me something important and I wouldn't listen. I'm sorry."

"No, Rikki, I have to apologize to you. I will never forgive myself for what I've done."

Rikki hugged her and could feel Cleo's tears on her shoulder.

"Everything will be ok." The curly blond whispered to her.

"No, it won't. First Emma, now you. You're leaving me all alone." And the brunette hugged her even tighter. "I don't want you to go." She whispered in Rikki's ear.

When they released from the hug Rikki went behind the bar and took out a bottle of wine with 6 glasses, taking them to their table.

"Let's drink." She said and poured the wine into the glasses. "About us. About our friendship and our memories together."

The curly blond took her glass and lifted it up.

"I want to make a toast. For you, the most amazing people I've ever met and had the honor to call my friends. And for the most amazing boyfriend I had. Thank you for the most wonderful memories you gave me. Thank you for being my brothers and sisters (when she said that she noticed the look Rebecca gave her, but she ignored it) in our extraordinary adventure!"

And she took a sip of the wine, one tear falling down her cheek. The others took a sip from their glasses too, their eyes water.

Rebecca remained silent at first, but Rikki sensed she was going to explode soon. She wasn't in a mood for another pointless fight so she turned to Cleo and Bella.

"Would you like to join me for a trip to Mako for one last time?" She asked them carefully picking her words in front of Becca.

They understood and nodded. Rikki sighed.

"Well, I guess this is it." She said and looked around.

Then Rebecca finally got up standing right in front of her and started yelling.

"What the bloody hell is wrong with you?"

"What do you mean?" Rikki asked her trying not to raise her voice.

"Mom died saving your life and it's like you don't even care!"

"Of course I care!" Rikki hissed angrily.

"No, you don't!" Rebecca shouted. "You're acting like nothing happened. Like you just had a bad day or something!"

"What do you expect?" Rikki shouted back. "That woman, our mother, left me when I was only four years old fifteen years later when I finally had gotten over what she did to me and I had started living a

normal life, she decides to come back out of the blue, to kidnap me, and top it all, I find out I have a sister. Then it turns out her own father is responsible for everything and in attempt to end my life he kills her. You have no idea what I'm going through, you have no idea how I feel so don't you dare to judge me!" Rikki was and screamed at her louder and louder.

"And have you asked yourself how I feel? Has it even crossed your mind that I'm hurting too and that I need you?!" Rebecca shouted back.

The others were looking at the two sisters not knowing what to say or what to do. Rikki noticed Cleo was looking at her hands just to check what she's doing with them.

Then something happened.

Rebecca was still screaming, but Rikki couldn't hear what exactly. The curly blond knew something was wrong. She felt hot like she had temperature, like she was burning up. Rikki felt dizziness and suddenly the whole room started spinning around. Everything was becoming from blur to clear and then to blur again. The curly blond noticed a movement next to her, but at that moment she felt her legs were giving her up. She grabbed the table trying to keep herself up, but she knocked the empty bottle from the wine. She heard someone screaming her name and running towards her, but she couldn't hold herself up anymore and she fell unconscious on the ground.

While Rikki was fighting with Rebecca Zane noticed something was going on with her. She had red blotches on her face and she seemed hot. He thought it was because of her powers and started walking towards the bar to get her a cold bottle of water, when he saw Cleo's eyes widened in terror and he heard her scream.

"Rikki!"

Zane turned around in a flash to see Rikki falling down. He ran towards her and caught her in her arms seconds before she hit the floor. His heart was beating like crazy. He felt she was extremely hot. Her eyes were closed, but her face now was very pale and had a strange grimace on it.

"Rikki! Rikki open your eyes!" Zane cried and ran into the office to put her on the couch.

Cleo, Bella and the others rushed in after him. Cleo and Bella bursted into tears. Will was shocked. Lewis who seemed more in control then the others, ran to the fridge and took a bottle of cold water. He walked back into the office and gave Zane the bottle.

"Try to put some in her mouth. She has to drink something or else whatever is heating her will dehydrate her."

"I can't, she's unconscious!" Zane told him. He hesitated for a minute then added, "We've got to call an ambulance!"

"What? But Zane, we can't, what about our secret?" Cleo said and she looked at Becca shocked, realizing she had said too much.

"Right now, all I want is Rikki to be ok!" Zane shouted.

Then Bella shocked them with her suggestion.

"Call your dad. Maybe he can help her."

Zane looked at her. Maybe that was not such a bad idea. He grabbed his phone and called his dad. After Harrison reassured him he'd come as fast as he could, Zane hung up.

He kneeled down next to couch on the side of Rikki's head and took her hand in his. She was very hot and her hand burned him, but I didn't move his hand. Then he felt her fingers trembling in his. He held them tight in his own, ignoring the pain of them burning him.

While they were waiting for his dad, they were quiet, and the only thing breaking the silence was Rebecca's crying and her quiet murmuring "It's all my fault". Zane looked at her. Suddenly he felt anger. It really was her fault after all. She started shouting at Rikki and fighting with her, causing Rikki to get angry and to get her powers out of control. He looked back at Rikki trying to calm himself down and he saw one tear falling down her cheek.

"Rikki! Rikki, can you hear me?" He asked with no avail.

Nothing happened. Then the door of the office opened and Harrison came in.

He walked over to the couch and touched Rikki's face with his hand, but quickly moved it away.

"She's too hot. If she isn't cooled down soon it might cause damage to some of her organs. She needs to be taken to a hospital!" He said.

Zane immediately took out his phone and called an ambulance. They took Rikki and rushed her into the hospital.

There his dad and two more doctors took her to make tests to explore her condition in order to find out how to help her. Zane and the others had to wait until they were told they could see her. But right before they had the chance to get into her room Harrison walked over to them.

"Can we talk for a moment?" He asked all of them.

They nodded and sat back on the chairs. Zane's father looked at his son.

"How is she?" He asked full with suspicion and fear.

"Look, there's something you should know. What is happening with her is that she's pregnant, Zane." Harrison said looking straight into his son's eyes. "And her baby is what's killing her."

13. Chapter 13: Life is fragile

Chapter 13: Life is fragile, handle with care

* * *

><p>In the previous chapter:_

_ "She's pregnant, Zane." Harrison said looking Zane straight into the eyes. "And her baby is what's killing her."_

* * *

><p>Zane tried to assimilate what he'd just been told.<p>

"What do you mean her baby is killing her?" He asked his father.

"There're complications with her pregnancy. I won't bother you with medical therms, but her baby is poisoning her body."

Zane could swear that his heart skipped a beat.

"So, what are the options?"

"Well, the best for her is to end her pregnancy-"

"And not to give the baby a chance to live?!" Zane interrupted Harrison. "What's the alternative?"

"She can try to carry the baby all nine months and we will do our best to help her, but she'll be getting worse ever week, every day maybe. Her organs might stop working one by one and she might not survive to the last month of the pregnancy."

"You said "might". So there is a chance for her to survive?"

"Yes, but you have to understand that chance is less than 5% and it's very risky. Do you really want to risk her life?"

"The choice is hers." Zane said. "We should ask her, don't you think?"

"She's in a coma. We don't know when she'll come out of it."

"We can wait until she wakes up."

"That could take weeks. Even months."

"I don't care!" Zane insisted.

He couldn't lose her and the baby. He'd rather give his life, but save them both. His father put his arm on his shoulder.

"Look, whatever you decide, I'll always be by your side helping you!" He told him.

Zane looked him in the eyes. Harrison could see the determination in them. Then he gave his son a hug, before turning to the whole gang.

"Go to see her now. She needs you. I'll call her father."

When they got to her room Cleo put her arm on Zane's shoulder.

"We shouldn't all go in together. You and Rebecca go first. We'll go to the hospital's chapel to say a prayer for her."

"Ok." Zane nodded. "Thanks." And he and Becca walked inside Rikki's room.

When he saw her lying there so weak and fragile his heart broke on two; she was supposed to be so full of life, not like this. He moved to sit in a chair next to her bed, with Becca copying his moves, and took Rikki's hand in his. With the other hand he fondled her head. He finally gave up and one of the tears he was trying so hard to hold back rolled down his cheek, but he quickly brushed it away.

"I don't want to lose you two." He whispered in her ear. "And I know I won't. You're so strong and I know you can do it. You can carry this baby for nine months."

He was trying to give her courage, but it felt more like he was trying to give some to him.

{ * }

The chapel was empty until four people walked in. Two couples walking hand in hand took their seats next to each other and in their minds they send a prayer for their best friend and most of all sister by heart.

Cleo squeezed Lewis' hand as she looked up to the statue of Jesus Christ. A tear rolled down her cheek, but she squeezed her eyes shut and started praying. "_Please, save Rikki and her baby. Don't take them away from us. Don't take them away from Zane. Give Zand, Rikki and their unborn baby strength to get through this. Please, don't take Rikki away from me. I love her, Emma and Bella like my sisters and I can't lose any of them. Please let her live. Please let them both live!"_

Lewis' squeezed back Cleo's hand. He had never done this before, because he wasn't very religioys, but if it was going to help his best friend and her baby, he'd do it and so much more. He looked at the saint statue before him not knowing how to begin, but eventually he did. "_Rikki may have teased me hundreds of times, but she's like my sister and I love her like a biological one. Don't take her and her baby away. Don't take them away from Zane, from Cleo, from Bella and Emma..don't take her away from us. She's the strongest person I know and is too young to die. Her time hasn't come yet. Not yet!"_

Bella was sitting next to Will, tears rolling her cheeks. She leaned her head down and sent out her prayer. "_One year ago if someone had told me I'd gain such wonderful friends I'd have never believed him. But it happened. These people are my brothers and sisters by heart and I can't imagine my life without any of them. So, please, I beg you, don't take her away. Let this wonderful, young girl and her innocent baby live. Rikki's one of the most amazing and loyal people I know. Please let her live. Let them both live!"_

Just like Lewis, Will felt a bit awkward, but he didn't care. If sending out a prayer would help Rikki, he would do it. He however had a secret and when he looked at the statue of Christ, he felt like it

was seeing right through him with its stone eyes. He quickly shook the feeling and sent a prayer for Rikki. "_I've never asked you for anything. But now I'm standing right here, before you, asking you for one single thing; don't let Rikki die. Don't let her and her baby die. Don't take her away, because...because I can't live without her. I want only one thing and it is for Rikki to be happy. And if that means having a baby with Zane so be it. Just don't take her and her innocent baby. Save them. Save them both!"_

When they left the chapel, the faces of all of them were wet. In their hearts they were aching. Now they couldn't do anything else, but go to Rikki's room and give Zane support. They all had to wait. To wait for destiny to decide what will happen to their sister by heart. And they hated that, but there's nothing else they could do.

Only wait.

{ * }

Zane and Becca stayed in Rikki's room for an hour or so, when he heard the door open, and looked up to see the others coming in.

"How is she?" Bella asked him quietly.

"Still the same. There's no change." He said.

She and the others silently sat on the other chairs. The hours were passing by with no change, when Zane suddenly realized there was something red in the small bag for Rikki's urine. He immediately started shouting for a doctor to come. His father ran in the room along with another doctor. They asked all of them to go out and wait there. Zane tried to ask them what was going on, but no one answered. The group waited outside the room for about half an hour, but it seemed like ages. Finally Harrison showed up and walked over to them. His face was very serious and Zane's heart skipped a beat.

"What's going on with Rikki?" He quickly asked.

"You better sit, all of you." His dad said.

Zane trembled, because he knew he was going to tell them something very bad and he sat on the nearest chair.

"Someone's been trying to kill Rikki." His dad announced.

"_What_?" They all asked at the same time.

"Someone's been poisoning her for months with small doses of arsenic. We made some tests to find out why her kidneys stopped working and we found it in her blood. We put her on hemodialysis to clean her body and her kidneys."

Zane tried to assume what his father was telling him, but it was too hard.

"So you're saying someone wanted Rikki dead?" He asked his dad.

Harrison nodded.

"Do you have any idea who?" He asked his son and his friends, but they all said they had no idea.

"Can we see her?" Zane asked.

"Yes. We stabilized her."

Zane hurried inside her room. But when he opened the door to come in, he collided to someone and they both fell on the floor. When they got back up Zane looked at the person. It was someone he didn't expect or wanted to see.

"_You_?!" He yelled. "What the hell are you doing here?"

She didn't answer, but just ran away. Then suddenly it hit him. It was her. It was her who's been poisoning Rikki. But his thoughts were interrupted by the monitor that was showing Rikki's heartbeat. The sound and the graphic of her heartbeat were getting slower and slower. He ran to Rikki and took her hand in his.

"Rikki, stay with me! Please don't leave me! I know the hardest thing in this world is to live in it, but please live! Live for our baby! Live..for me!"

And he leaned and touched her lips with his. Suddenly her necklace started glowing with a strong blue light. That light wrapped all over their bodies and in a heartbeat it disappeared into them. When Zane pulled from the kiss he looked at her. He saw a tear falling down her cheek. And then a miracle happened. Slowly in what seemed like ages she opened her beautiful blue eyes looking straight into his.

That, Zane could swear, was the happiest moment of his entire existence.

14. Chapter 14: Surprises

Chapter 14: Surprises

In the previous chapter:

>Slowly in what seemed like ages she opened her beautiful blue eyes looking right into Zane's. That, he could swear, was the happiest moment of his entire existence.

* * *

><p>Zane rushed inside Rikki's room but the others decided to wait and let him have a few moments alone with Rikki.<p>

The moment he entered the room, however, they saw someone running out of it. The group stared at shock before Will who was stunned broke the silence.

"What are you doing here?"

She didn't respond and tried to walk away, but he was faster. He caught her arm and forced her to turn back to him.

"Please tell me you aren't the one poisoning Rikki!" He said, his

tone begging.

When he didn't get an answer he pulled away disgusted from her.

"I can't believe it!"

She looked at him with sadness in the eyes. She couldn't bear his look.

"Will, please-" She tried to take his hand but he stepped back.

"Get out of here!" He said calm but firmly.

One tear rolled down her cheek and she ran away.

Will took a deep breath and dropped in the chair next to Bella. Cleo rested her head on Lewis' shoulder, while he was gently fondling her hair. Becca was sitting two chairs away from them all. Bella who was sitting next to Cleo tried to process what just happened. She put her arm on Will's shoulder, but he was too angry and upset to sit still, and soon started pacing around.

The awkward silence was broke off Cleo's phone that suddenly started ringing. She got it out from her pocket and looked at the screen. It was an unknown number. Cleo showed it to Lewis and he instructed her.

"Pick up, but turn on the loudspeaker."

Cleo nodded and did what she was told.

"Hello?" She said.

She expected anyone else but the very person who answered happily on the other line.

"Cleo, it's me, I'm back!"

"_Emma_?!" Both Cleo and Lewis gasped a bit too excitedly, making Becca, Bella and Will jump a bit.

Smiles of happiness appeared on both of their faces.

"Hello to you, too, Lewis!" Emma cheered on the other end of the line.

"Em, where are you?" Cleo said, trying to sound calm, but tears started choking her.

"In my house." Emma responded. "Cleo, what is it, are you ok?" She added, hearing how upset her friend sounded.

"Em, please come to the hospital as fast as possible!"

"Why, what's going on? Cleo, where's Rikki?" Emma asked and Cleo noticed the panic in her voice.

"Come to the hospital and I'll explain everything." She told her.

"Ok, I'm on my way!" Emma said.

As much as she was surprised to do it, Cleo couldn't help but smile. Lewis noticed that.

"Why are you smirking?"

"Emma's return may wake Rikki up. It may help her and make her cheer up." Cleo answered him.

Lewis nodded and Cleo rested her head on his shoulder again. They waited for about 15 minutes when they heard someone running to them and turned their head to that direction. Her hair was in a ponytail and was waving behind her back. She was wearing blue jeans, light blue runner and a white t-shirt under it. Cleo and Lewis stood up and hurried to hug her, while Rebecca, Bella and Will were looking at them awkwardly. Cleo turned around to introduce Emma to them.

"Bella, Will, this is Emma. She's Rikki and I's best friend." Cleo looked at Bella. "She's one of us."

They both nodded to Emma and she nodded back.

"Em." Cleo continued. "This is Bella, she is one of us and Will here is her boyfriend."

Emma's face changed immediately as she relaxed and gave them a warm smile.

"I'm very happy to meet you."

She hugged Bella and shook hands with Will. Then she turned back to Cleo and suddenly her look fell over Rebecca.

"And who is she?"

"I'm Rikki's sister." She responded before Cleo could even open her mouth.

"What?" Emma gasped her eyes wide open. "But Rikki doesn't have brothers or sisters!"

"Well, she has one and that's me." Becca spat at her face.

"Ok, enough!" Lewis interrupted them. "The last thing we need is you two fighting right now."

"Lewis is right." Cleo nodded.

"Wait, where's Rikki?" Emma asked.

Suddenly everyone's faces became sad and worry spread all over them. Cleo took Emma's hands and made her sit down with her. Word by word she told her everything. In the end they were both crying and hugging each other. Bella's eyes were watery again. Lewis was sitting next to Cleo with his hand on her shoulder. Will who had calmed down was the one to break the tense silence.

"Let's go to her room."

The others nodded. Cleo who was the fastest to reach the door noticed through the window Rikki's eyes were opened and she was talking to Zane. She turned with a big smile to the others.

"She's awake!" She announced and they all smiled.

Cleo turned to Emma.

"Wait here, I want us to surprise Rikki with your appearance. I'll give you a sign for when to come in."

Emma nodded and the others came in.

Inside Rikki's room Zane smiled and fondled her cheek. He was so happy she finally was awake.

"Hey, stranger." He said softly.

"Hey." Rikki gave him a small smile too, despite the pain she was feeling in her stomach. "Am I in a hospital?"

Zane nodded.

"What happened?" Rikki asked him. "I remember me and Rebecca fighting, but nothing else."

"You fainted." Zane answered her. "You were so hot and it seemed your powers were out of control so I panicked and brought you here." He kissed her forehead. "Don't ever try to scare me like that, again, ok?!"

She smiled at him, but she could tell by the look at his eyes something was bothering him.

"What is it?" She asked him. "There's something else, I can see it in your eyes."

"No." He lied. "Nothing's bothering me."

But the trembling in his voice gave him away.

"You were never good at hiding your feelings." Rikki said and fondled his hand that was holding hers with a smile. "Come on, spill. What's going on?"

"Nothing is going on, Rikki!"

She began to answer him, but the door of her room opened and the others came in. They all sat at the chairs next to Rikki's bed, except for Becca. She remained at her place to the door. She was feeling very uncomfortable and a bit jealous watching the closeness between Rikki and her friends. Rikki noticed Becca was still at the door.

"Come." She told her,

Becca hesitated but made a step forward.

"Are you scared of me?" Rikki asked quietly trying not to

laugh.

Becca shook her head.

"Well, sit then." Rikki said pointing to one of the free chairs.

Becca obeyed and sat down silently. Cleo turned to Rikki.

"Rikki, I'm so happy you're awake, I was so scared for you!"

Rikki took her hand in hers and squeezed it.

"I'm sorry, I didn't want to scare you."

Cleo smiled at her.

"It doesn't matter now. Hey, you know what, I have a surprise for you!" She said excitedly.

"Cleo, you know how much I hate surprises!" Rikki complained.

"You're going to love this one, I promise." Cleo said.

"Really?" Rikki rose her eyebrows.

"Really!" Cleo nodded.

She took out her phone and wrote a quick message to someone, then slid it back in her pocket. She then looked at Rikki smiling, unable to hide her excitement. Rikki was just going to ask her what she was so excited about, but was interrupted when the door of her room opened and inside walked in a smiling, blond girl. Rikki couldn't help herself but scream with excitement:

"Emma!"

Emma rushed to the bed, straight into Rikki's open arms, and hugged her tightly. When they released they both had huge smiles upon their faces.

"I can't believe it's really you!" Rikki exclaimed. "Do you have any idea how much we've missed you?!"

"I missed you too!" Emma said to her.

Cleo turned to Rikki and said with a smirk.

"I told you, you're gonna love your surprise!"

"Yeah, you were right, thank you so much!" Rikki answered and Cleo gave her a warming hug. All four were smiling at each other. And Cleo had been right; Emma's return and surprise appearance at the hospital definitely made Rikki feel better.

"So, what happened to me? Zane said I had fainted, but he didn't want to tell me anything else."

To her surprise their smiles dropped and their faces darkened.

"What is it?" Rikki asked. "You look like I'm dying or something." he laughed, but their faces remained worried and tears filled their eyes.

Rikki's smile faded away.

"Am I?" She asked them firmly though they could see her eyes were wet too.

Cleo took Rikki's arm.

"Rikki, look, you fainted because.. She started, when suddenly she groaned and put her hands on her stomach.

"Rikki, are you ok?" Zane asked her immediately, taking one of her hands in his.

"Yes I'm f.." She started to say, but another sharp pain pierced her stomach and she groaned again.

She felt cold sweat all over her body and she realized something was wrong. Zane quickly called a doctor, and his father rushed inside to check on Rikki. He quickly gave her a medicine, then asked Zane to come with him outside.

"Did you tell her?"

Zane shook his head.

"We were going to when she started hurting."

"You must tell her now. That pain she had were contractions. You must tell her everything, because we might not have other choice but end her pregnancy."

"What?" Zane said. "No, you can't!"

"Zane, listen to me. Her body wants to push out the baby and we can't slow the process for too long. You must talk to her now!" Harrison said and looked straight at his son's eyes before pulling him for a hug. "You're both strong and healthy young people, you can have other babies, even if this one isn't meant to make it to this world." He said to Zane softly after he pulled from the hug.

Zane's eyes were water, but he took a deep breath and walked into Rikki's room. He didn't know how to do what he was meant to, but he knew that if he doesn't do it now, he'll probably never have the guts to.

He sat next to her bed and took her hand. Their friends all nodded to him in a sign of their full support. He kissed her forehead, and a tear rolled down his cheek as he opened his mouth, watching her right in her blue eyes.

Now or never.

Chapter 15: Doubts

Now or never.

Zane was just going to tell Rikki everything when suddenly the door of her hospital room burst open.

"Rikki!"

"Dad!" She opened her hands to hug him.

"Sweetheart, how...how are you?"

"I'm ok, dad. Really."

Her dad smiled to her.

"Mr. Chadwick, guys...may I talk with Rikki in private please?"

"Of course." The others said and Rikki's dad nodded.

"I'll be right outside Rikki, call me if you need anything."

She smiled to him and nodded.

When he walked out and closed the door behind himself Zane turned back to Rikki. He held her hand even tighter and started talking.

"Rikki, look the reason you fainted is that you..you're pregnant."

After he broke the news to her he observed her reaction.

"Pregnant?" She asked shocked and looked down to her stomach placing her hand on her tummy.

There was a silence for a few minutes, then a small smile spread across her face and she looked at Zane.

"Really? There's a baby growing inside me?"

He nodded and gave her a smile.

"Look the thing is that the doctor says the baby is poisoning your body. That's why you were in pain earlier. You had had contractions." He made a pause to observe her reaction, but her face was blank.

"Are you saying that my body was trying to get rid of my baby?"

Zane nodded slightly.

"The doctor says that the best for you is to take out the baby and put an end to your pregnancy. But if you decide you want to keep the baby and to try carry it they will help you with whatever they can." Zane gently fondled her cheek. "So it's up to you now. You're the only one who can decide what to do. And I promise you, I'll support your decision on 100% whatever it is. I'll always be by your side." And he kissed her forehead. "I love you!"

She turned to look at him and their eyes connected.

"Would you give me a moment alone?"

Zane nodded and started to walk out of the room. Just when he opened the door a nurse came in, pushing a patient in a stretcher.

"Someone wanted to say "Hello!" The nurse smiled to Rikki.

Realizing who was the patient Rikki smiled.

"Derek!"

He grinned at her.

"Good to see you too, stranger!"

Zane felt a wave of anger inside him. He was the one who was always calling her "stranger". That was their thing. What right had Derek to call her that?!

"I'll be right outside if you need me!" Zane told Rikki and she nodded with a small smile. He then walked out of the room.

Once out he walked over to where the others were sitting and sat next to Rikki's dad, burying his head in his hands. He then felt a hand on his shoulder and rose up his head to take a look. It was Terry.

"I spoke to Rikki's doctor and I know everything, Zane." He told him calmly. "And I want you to know that I love Rikki more than anything and I'll always stand by my daughter's decisions. So if you ever need anything, anything at all, you can always count on me!" And he gave Zane a warming smile.

"Thank you, Mr. Chadwick!" The brunette gave him a smile too.

He just couldn't believe his ears. He thought Terry would want Rikki to make an abortion and save herself, but here he was, giving them both his support. Zane would've never be able to thank him for that.

When Zane walked out of the room Rikki's smile disappeared immediately.

"So...how are you?" Derek asked.

She shrugged.

"Fine. I'm fine."

"You're such a good liar, but you're not fooling me." He said.

She looked at him and sighed.

"You know me too well."

They both chuckled at that.

"Are you going to tell me what's going on then?"

"I just...I'm pregnant." She looked at him and tried to ignore the look of disappointment on his face.

"It's his isn't it?"

She nodded.

"The thing is...my baby's the reason I'm here."

"I don't understand."

"The doctors think it's poisoning my body. And now I have to decide whether to save its life and risk mine, or kill it in order to save myself."

"I don't think you have a choice."

"Meaning?"

"You have to save yourself."

"_What_?"

"Rikki, you're a beautiful, young, healthy girl. You can have as many babies as you want. But you have to be alive in order to do so." He didn't look her in the eyes when he said that.

"I can't believe my ears! How can you even say that? This baby was conceived with love, passion and devotion and I can't kill it! I won't! Even if I have to die, I'll do anything to help this baby be born!" And she looked away from him.

She couldn't believe he could just say something so selfish and arrogant. She could never kill her child.

The curly blond might be a rebel who loves being a loner, she might be scared to death to be a mother, but one thing she could never be; a murderer!

"I'm sorry." He murmured, but Rikki ignored him.

"Save it!" She said quietly through her teeth without turning to face him.

She felt him touching her hand but she pulled away.

"Don't."

The curly blond heard him sigh and felt him put his head down on his pillows. She turned her back to him facing the blank wall and she fell deep in my thoughts.

Soon she started drifting off to sleep.

Outside Rikki's room Rebecca was sitting next to Cleo and Lewis and was looking at the person next to Zane who was supposed to be her father.

Rikki hadn't told him anything about her, nor did any of the others, her friends. Becca heard what he told Zane and couldn't help but feel a little jealous of Rikki. She was the lucky one of the two of them. She had grown up without money, but with a loving father who was willing to put the world in her feet. Becca on the other hand was rich, but her mother seemed to had never really cared about her.

She sighed and turned to whisper to Cleo, "He seems nice", nodding towards her father.

Cleo smiled and nodded.

"He's really nice, Rikki idolizes him."

"What do you think will be his reaction when he finds out about me?"

"I'm sure he'll be happy. He'll be confused at first, but he'll be happy."

"I hope so." Becca responded absent-mindedly and Cleo pat her shoulder.

"It'll be fine. Don't worry."

Rebecca waned to believe her so bad.

16. Chapter 16: Hiatus

Hello, everyone!

_I'm sorry to inform you that I'll be no longer updating "Together Again". It's been a long time since I've written the last chapter, and I kinda lost inspiration for it. When I started writing this story, I had big plans for it (still have ssome, but ever since the last chapter, I've been busy updating my other stories and I kinda left that one out. One day, maybe I will continue "Together Again". But until then I'm putting it on hiatus. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all 8 favorites, 14 follows and 31 reviews! _

Have a goor day!

End
file.